

A Cthulhian Miscellany



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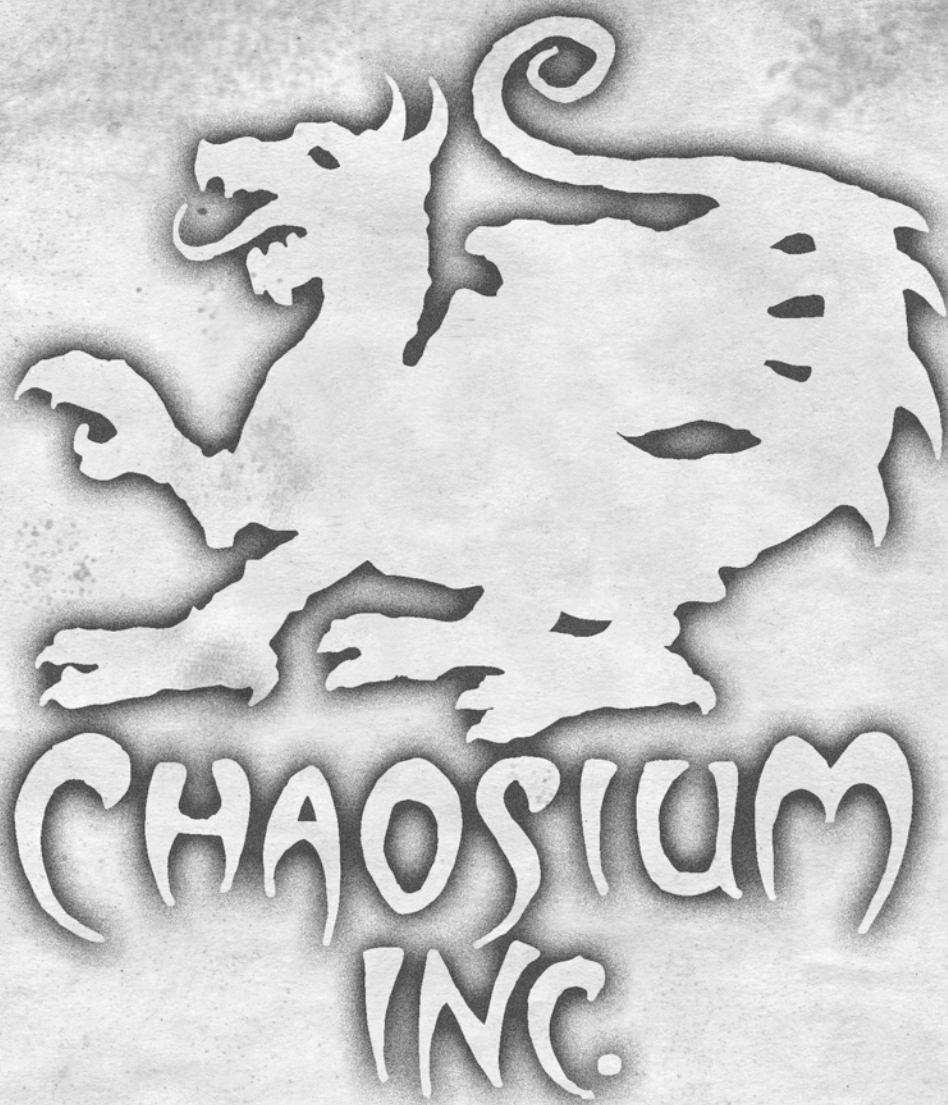
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**Terrifying Tools and Reality-Wrenching Rules
For Keepers and Investigators**





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A Cthulhian Miscellany:

Terrifying Tools and Reality-Wrenching Rules For Keepers and Investigators

(Optional New Skills, Spells, Insanities, Mythos Books, Monsters, NPCs, and More)

for
Late 19th - through Early 21st -Century
Call of Cthulhu®

By
William A. Barton

Art by Kim Strombo Graham
(Pages 1, 3, 4, 31, 36, 39, 45, 58, 70, 74, 78, 80, 83, 88, 104)
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(Pages 61, 63, 64, 65, 69, 98)



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Stop him before
he designs again!

Author's Bio: *William A. Barton* is the author/designer of the first two editions of the award-winning *Cthulhu By Gaslight* (and a co-author of the upcoming third edition). His other *CoC* adventures include "The Curse of Chaugnar Faugn," originally published in *Curse of the Chthonians*, and "The Killer Out of Space," in *Cthulhu Now*. His contributions to the latest editions of *Call of Cthulhu* include the 1890s skills, price lists, and weapons and the Mythos descriptions and spells for The Colour Out of Space, Chaugnar Faugn, and the Rat-Things, as well as assorted other tidbits. He is also the author of the M.U. monographs *Menace from the Moon* and *Return of the Ripper*. Outside of *Call of Cthulhu*, he was a contributor to Chaosium's *Superworld* RPG; co-author of the first three editions of Steve Jackson Games' *GURPS Space* and *GURPS Space Atlas I* (and contributor to several other *GURPS* supplements); and designer/publisher of his own RPG, *So Ya Wanna Be A Rock 'N' Roll Star! A Rock 'N' Role-Playing Game*TM. (This award-winning RPG is available directly from Bill for \$18 pp. at P.O. Box 26290, Indianapolis, IN 46226-0290; on the Web, visit <http://bill-barton-games.iwarp.com>; the game also includes several spoofs of and references to the Mythos.)

Bill currently works as an editor for Wiley Publishing, in Indianapolis, Indiana, a division of John Wiley & Sons—original publishers of Edgar Allen Poe's tales. He lives in Indy with his wife and four cats. Hobbies and interests (besides *CoC* and RPGs) include Sherlock Holmes (check out his scion's Web site at <http://surrey-shore.freeservers.com>), Victorian England, the Mythos in general, Fortean phenomena (especially Planet X and alternative archeology), Godzilla (whom he pitted against Cthulhu in a 2006 Gen Con *CoC* event), science fiction (especially Victorian scientific romances, a la H.G. Wells), Biblical prophecy, classic rock (listening and playing), parody songwriting, and others that he rarely has time for.

A Cthulhian Miscellany

New optional rules, skills, spells, Mythos books, insanities, and more for further expanding Call of Cthulhu role playing

by William A. Barton

INTRODUCTION

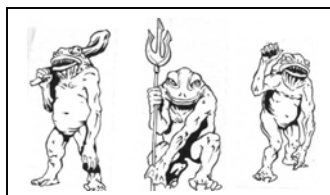
Call of Cthulhu is, of course, an excellent role-playing system and one that easily lends itself to expansion in many areas. In keeping with that spirit, this book explores a number of optional expansions to the original *Call of Cthulhu* rules—primarily in the areas of new, specialized skills; new spells, books, and magical artifacts; and new (or expanded) insanities to inflict upon hapless Investigators. It also introduces a few new Mythos creatures for your playing enjoyment (for those of you who actually *like* dying horribly or ending up gibbering insanely in a asylum), along with several NPCs to complicate your Investigators' lives.

Guidelines for creating psychic vampires in the game are also included, as is a sample vehicle and a few other tidbits. These optional additions to the game may also be used as desired with the various supplements to *CoC*, including *Cthulhu by Gaslight* and *Pulp Cthulhu*, and can be fit quite nicely into most eras of the game, from the 1890s through the 1920s and on into today. (And some may even be

adaptable to *Dreamlands*, *Dark Ages*, and other settings or time periods, albeit with additional work on the part of the Keeper.)

Keepers and players alike should remain aware, however, that these are *not* official additions to the *Call of Cthulhu* game. They are merely those the author has found useful in his own campaigns and that are being passed on for individual Keepers to borrow, if they wish, for incorporation into their own *CoC* games. If you find something among these rules you think would be useful, by all means employ it in your games. If it doesn't fit, or you have rules of your own to cover the situation, ignore it. Future M.U. monographs by this author may incorporate some of these additions, but your own acceptance of them, or that of any other Keeper, is as always at your discretion. The author hopes that any material herein that you decide to use will only increase your enjoyment of role-playing in H.P. Lovecraft's worlds of dark fantasy.

Note: Most of the art in this book by Kim Strombo Graham was originally commissioned for a licensed *CoC* book to be called *Shades of Innsmouth*. Unfortunately, that book never made it to publication, so Kim's excellent art has languished in my files the past two decades. I'd hoped to finally get that book of scenarios published as an M.U. monograph, but so far, the author of the title scenario hasn't responded to my queries about it, so rather than wait further to hear back from him, I've decided to go ahead and put as much of the art as I can fit into this book. That way, you get the benefit of Kim's visions of the Mythos. (And now you know why you'll be seeing so many illustrations of Deep Ones in a book otherwise nearly devoid of them)





Mythos Lesson #1: *Never follow a Deep One into a Limbo Gate (see p. 41)!*

NEW (OPTIONAL) SKILLS FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

*Miscellaneous talents to aid your Investigators in their eternal
Quest for a Mythos-free world—or at least to retain their own sanity!*

Following are several new skills for *Call of Cthulhu* that a Keeper may incorporate into his campaign. Several are based on skills in other, compatible Chaosium games; some come from other scenarios I've written that required more specialized talents than existed at the time; others were devised for use with the author's own *Cthulhu by Gaslight* campaign but didn't make the final version of the book. These last have been "genericized" for use with regular *CoC* campaigns based in the 1920s, the present, or in other time periods (where appropriate). Players should consult with their Keeper before choosing any of these skills for their Investigators.

(**A Note on Redundancy:** The knowledgeable reader will find in this list several skills that already exist in *CoC* or one of its supplements—in particular, the first *Keeper's Companion*. Among these are Disguise, Hypnosis, Gunsmith, Literature, Meteorology, and a few others. They appear here, however, because none of these skills had yet been created for the game when I originally devised them. Rather than simply dropping those, I present them here for their historic value—to give you an idea where *CoC* thinking was heading in the mid-'80s among those of us in the freelance world. Feel free to use them to supplement an existing skill of the same name, or to replace it, or just ignore this version. It is, after all, *your* game. [Or just make a SAN roll for 0/1D3 SAN if it's all too much to contemplate.] It's quite possible, too, that similar skills may appear in future Chaosium publications, such as *Pulp Cthulhu*; if so, consider those the "official" versions and these as just interesting variations. For those skills that now have an "official" *CoC* equivalent, I've added the beginning percentages for those versions in brackets after my own versions. If no bracket value appears, the base chances are the same for both my and the "official" version—if one exists. Note that I've been a bit more generous on the base chances for some of these skills than are the official versions. Feel free to adjust these values for your own campaign.)

OPTIONAL SKILL USES

First, here are a few optional rule variations you can use with *CoC* skills. (Some of the following skill descriptions incorporate these into their write-ups; others, you can extrapolate from those.)

Skill Specializations: If the Keeper okays it, additional skill specializations after the first may be purchased for an Investigator at half the normal cost. If a player expends skill points for his Investigator to learn a skill with two or more specializations, as described in the skill descriptions that follow, the Investigator may buy another specialization of that same skill for half the normal skill point cost. A player who spends 40 skill points for a 40% *Survival (Desert)* skill for his Investigator, for example, may then purchase *Survival (Jungle)* at 40% for only 20 skill points. He may then purchase *Survival (Mountains)* at 40% for another 20 points. (**Optional:** If the Keeper agrees, he may purchase the third specialization at half again, so that his 40% *Survival (Mountains)* skill costs him only 10 skill points.)

Alternatively, the Keeper may allow the normal purchase of any skill that has specializations at normal point cost, but allow the Investigator a chance equal to half the general skill percentage to succeed in any roll that would have required the specialization. A character with Heavy Weapons skill at 50% and no specialization, therefore, could roll to fire mortars, cannons, rockets, and other heavy weapons all at 25%—half his skill percentage in the general Heavy Weapons skill.

Similarly, if the Keeper wishes, he may allow the purchase of any specialization of a skill at full cost for that skill, but allow the Investigator a chance to succeed at all other specializations of the skill at from one-fifth to one-half his normal percentage for the one specialization, depending on how close the two are in nature. The Investigator above with *Survival (Jungle)* at 40% could then roll for *Survival (Desert)* at one-fifth his Jungle survival skill, or 8%, even without purchasing any points in that specialty. On the other hand, if he was in a forest, the Keeper may



allow him to roll at up to one-half his Jungle skill percentage—20%—because forests and jungles have more in common than jungles and deserts.

Whichever course the Keeper chooses, he should use it universally and not switch from one method of specialization to another to avoid confusing his players.

Gaining Area Familiarity: Certain skills, such as Streetwise, Civics, or Criminology (for the purpose of contacts), or even aspects of the Know roll, may be tied to a particular area, city, state, or country. If an Investigator travels to a different area, city, or country, he wouldn't be as knowledgeable of this new location as he is of his home base, and so his ability in area-based skills wouldn't be up to full speed. For example, a Boston-based character with Streetwise skill would be at full skill level while operating in the streets of Boston, but should the same Investigator travel to San Diego to track down a cultist, he'd be at half level at best for such area-based knowledge. For each week spent in the streets of San Diego, however, his skill would increase by 5% until it reached its normal level, and he'd have full skill on subsequent visits to the city. (In a foreign city or country, where a different language is spoken, such as Rome, or where the culture is very different, as in Japan, normal skill would be cut to one-fifth its regular chance, and regained at 5% for every two weeks spent in that country or culture.)

This general principal could also be applied to the Other Language skill if visiting a country with a different—but closely related—language. An Investigator with Other Language: Spanish skill would be at a disadvantage if visiting Brazil, where Portuguese is spoken, so at best he'd have a chance equal to half his skill percentage in Spanish to understand Portuguese. This percentage would increase as he became more familiar with the nuances of Portuguese and how the language relates to Spanish, until his chance to understand Portuguese reaches his Spanish skill -10%. He'd never quite pick up everything in Portuguese just from knowing Spanish, but if the Keeper feels he's done well enough (or he gets some very spectacular rolls), he may award the Investigator a skill in Portuguese equal to the highest percentage of his Spanish skill that he's reached in picking up the language.

Cashing in Base Chance Skill Points: Not all Investigators are created equal—and so not all characters would necessarily have the same base

chances in certain skills as described in the game's skill definitions (for the following skills and for others in the *CoC* rulebook and elsewhere). If a player's concept of his character calls for an Investigator to have no skill whatsoever in, say driving a vehicle, or he can't swim a stroke, or he couldn't hit the broadside of a barn with a rifle no matter how close he was to it, the Keeper would be justified in letting the player remove skill points from the base chances of such skills, and reassign them to other skills, to better reflect his concept of his Investigator.

The Keeper should, however, monitor such adjustments closely to avoid abuses. No player should be allowed, therefore, to lower the percentage of any of his Investigator's skills to less than 10% of normal base chances, or to a minimum of 01%. (Round up if there's a fraction.) And, in general, no more than two or three skills should be lowered this way, unless their base chances are very low to begin with (05% or less). (Accordingly, the higher the base chance of the skills a player wants to lower, the fewer skills should be so lowered.) The player may then apply these "cashed-in" skill points to other skills when he's generating his Investigator. This reflects how a character might compensate for a lack of ability in one area by becoming more skilled in another.

The Keeper should make sure that such point decreases are justified by the Investigator's back story. If, for example, he's a hopeless Hydrophobic who fears water, his base chance to Swim could easily be lowered to 03%—i.e., not only has he never learned to swim, but the very thought of being in water throws him into a panic (which doesn't give him much of a chance for survival should he fall overboard on a cruise). An Investigator who starts the game blind could validly lower his Library Use base chance to 03%, especially in the 1890s or 1920s, to reflect how difficult it would be for him to locate any information that requires vision. The same would be true of Spot Hidden (which, as an exception to the 01% rule, could be lowered to 0% if the Investigator was completely blind). An Investigator with a bum leg could lower his Jump skill to 3%, and one with a lame arm his Climb skill to 4%.

Again, the Keeper should monitor such skill point reallocations closely—a character with very high skill levels in only a few skills probably wouldn't be all that useful in play if he's practically a vegetable in all other areas. (Unless, of course, you're in need of more monster fodder than you have NPCs . . .)

Combining Old Skills for New: Because of the costs in skill points necessary to raise the new skills that follow to high enough levels, Keepers may want to handle them a different way. In many cases, newer skills can be created by combining and averaging two or more existing skills. For example, if a player wanted to create an Investigator who's a Paleontologist, rather than requiring him to spend skill points not only on the new Paleontology skill but on complementary ones such as Biology and Geology, the Keeper could instruct him just to use his skill points on the existing skills Biology and Geology. Then the player could average the percentage of each skill to gain Paleontology skill. (Biology + Geology /2 = Paleontology.)

Other skills could be combined and averaged this way to simulate new skills—Biology + Oceanology /2 = Marine Biology, or Geography + Oceanology /2 = Oceanography. With a bit of creativity, many of the following skills can be simulated by combining and averaging existing skills in the game (or an existing skill with one herein to simulate another new skill).

Lucky Guesses: This option enables Investigators with extremely low scores in a skill to still stand a chance of getting it right, almost through sheer luck alone. (After all, the difference between a base chance of 0% and 01% really doesn't make all that much difference 99.9% of the time.) An Investigator who has a skill of 01% in Astronomy, for example, doesn't know much about the stars and planets. But with so many stars and so much knowledge about the heavens that exists—especially today—it's entirely possible, however unlikely, that the 01% knowledge the Investigator possesses just happens by complete chance to be the bit of knowledge that he needs to, say, know in what constellation the star Aldebaran lies. And if that's the case, a 01% chance to make the roll doesn't really seem appropriate for the situation.

To better simulate the chance of a lucky break in such situations, rather than just roll the (abysmal) skill percentage for success, the Investigator's Luck roll should be averaged with the skill percentage for a "Lucky Guess" roll. In most cases, this would end up effectively giving the character one-half a Luck roll to know the information. (Although if the skill percentage is higher, the averaged roll would be better than half Luck as well.) If the character makes this roll, he's made a lucky guess (or just happens to know the one piece of info necessary to survive the

situation.) No skill increase rolls should be given for the low skill if the success is due to a Lucky Guess—unless the roll is actually lower than the skill's unaltered percentage. But such a course can help avoid some of those really frustrating experiences where nobody in the group has enough knowledge to pick up on an important clue or solve a vital problem—or even save someone's life.

Lucky Guesses needn't be limited to knowledge skills. A character with a low Locksmith skill, for example, can still be fortunate enough to stick a lockpick exactly where it's needed to open that difficult door that represents the Investigators' only chance for survival. Or an Investigator with only a few percentiles in Pilot Boat skill could, on a Lucky Guess, pull just the right lever on the control panel to get the boat streaking out of Dagon's way after the captain has disappeared down the monster's maw.

Keepers should be careful not to let players misuse Lucky Guesses as "Get-out-of-jaws-free" cards, particularly when poor play has put the Investigators at death's door. Each situation should be evaluated individually to determine whether a Lucky Guess is really appropriate. And the Keeper would be well within his right to first require an ordinary Luck roll to determine just how lucky any Investigator is that day. But in those life-and-death situations, where a single roll against a low skill can mean the difference between saving the earth or letting Cthulhu roam free, a Lucky Guess may be humanity's Last Best Hope. Or not . . .

SKILLS

And now, for your *CoC* playing enjoyment . . .

AGILITY: This "skill" is actually a calculated characteristic along the lines of the Luck or Idea roll. It reflects prowess in ordinary acts that require a certain measure of agility for success but that are not so difficult as to come under the mantle of *Acrobatics* or a similar skill. Examples are walking along a narrow ledge or the top of a stone wall without slipping, running swiftly up steep stairs, walking along highly slanted or slippery roofs, and so on. Agility rolls should be required only if there is a valid chance of failure. **Base chance:** DEX x 5%.

ACROBATICS: This skill enables an Investigator to engage in extraordinary feats of physical agility—tumbling, leaping, balancing on wires or ropes, falling safely from a great distance, swinging from ropes across chasms, and so on. A successful skill roll allows such feats to be performed safely and without

harm to the acrobat. Failure means the attempted act fails, and the acrobat must roll CON x 5% or less to avoid injury (the amount to be judged by the Keeper); a failure roll of 96-100% indicates a disastrous failure that will, at the very least, injure the acrobat and may cause unconsciousness or even death, depending on the feat being attempted.

Benevolent Keepers may allow a Luck roll following a failed Acrobatics roll to give the Investigator an opportunity to recover from his slip; if he makes the Luck roll, he may attempt either another Acrobatics roll *or* an Agility roll, at the Keeper's discretion. (This will usually be the lower of the two—unless another miss would almost certainly result in death or crippling injury).

Acrobatics skill may also be used to deliver a full body slam against an opponent that does 1D6 + db damage to the person attacked and 1D3 to the attacker; if the Acrobatics roll is one-fifth that needed of success, however, the attacker takes no damage and the attacked 2D6 + db. **Base chance:** 05%.

ACTING: This skill allows an Investigator to effectively act a role or play a part other than himself, either professionally or in daily life. The successful use of Acting skill enables a character to impersonate another person (although *Disguise* skill may also be required) or to project a personality other than his own for various lengths of time. It includes the ability to successfully mimic another's habitual actions, voice, and mannerisms. The actor must first have the chance to study the person he intends to mimic for at least an hour (or longer, determined by the Keeper). He must also make a successful roll against *Observation* skill (see below) or make an *Idea* roll to successfully pick up the necessary mannerisms; a *Listen* roll is required to imitate the voice of the person he's impersonating. (To simply impersonate another's voice alone falls under *Mimic* skill.)

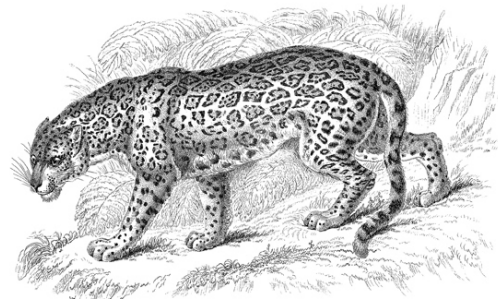
Acting skill also enables a person to successfully feign emotions that he doesn't feel, such as sorrow or joy. A successful *Acting* or *Psychology* roll tells an observer that another character is putting on an act, although the Acting roll alone gives no insight into the actor's true personality or emotional state—only that he *is* acting. (At least a 60% skill level is required for an Investigator to become a professional actor.) **Base chance:** 10%.

ADMINISTRATION: This is the skill that one uses in running or in dealing with bureaucracies,

corporations, and governments—any institution, in fact, in which red tape is rife. Successful use of this skill allows an Investigator to cut through said red tape in a minimal amount of time. (The exact times should be gauged by the Keeper, based on the Administration skill level of the user and the institution from which he is attempting to get action or information.)

A character who wishes to cut through bureaucratic tie ups successfully with this skill may also be required to make a *Fast Talk*, *Persuade*, *Civics*, *Politics*, or even *Diplomacy* roll in addition to Administration, depending on the nature of the bureaucracy—all the better to convince the person with whom he's dealing to allow him quick access to information he may not normally be privileged to see—for example, classified military or police files.

The skill may be similarly used to impress or persuade administrators of your sincerity and need to know/act in certain matters. (You could use the skill, for example, to convince a bureaucrat that you really *need* him to get out of bed and down to his office at 1 a.m. to sign your permit to survey the sewers before dawn). **Base chance:** 10%.



Nice kitty, kitty, kitty . . .

ANIMAL HANDLING: If an Investigator works around animals in any capacity, this is the skill he needs to keep them in line. Animal Handling skill can be used to train wild animals (albeit over a period of time, to be determined by the Keeper), as well as to entice already trained animals into performing as he wishes. The skill may also be used to calm down a trained animal that's been panicked or spooked by something—though it would be of little use on a herd of stampeding cattle (or worse, elephants—trained or otherwise.) To try to calm or “stare down” a wild animal, especially to keep one from attacking, the Investigator would need to roll one-fifth his normal skill percentage in Animal Handling. Lion tamers, entertainers using animals in their acts (from dancing bears to trained leopards to monkeys grinding an

organ), and cowpokes herding buffalo or other grazing beasts all need this skill at higher levels to successfully make their living. At his option, the Keeper may require his Investigators to take specializations in this skill for different animals or classes of animals (carnivores, cats, grazers, and so on)—after all, horse whispering and taming tigers require very different techniques. **Base chance:** 10%.

ARCHITECTURE: This skill represents talent in designing and planning various types of structures, from bridges and towers to full-scale buildings and luxury liners. It gives the Investigator a wide-ranging knowledge of architectural styles and designs, such that he could identify a particular building as being in the Gothic or Tudor style or that it is the product of a particular architect. (He may also be able to identify certain structures as being non-Euclidian, but this wouldn't give him any insight into their builders or similar information, which would fall under *Cthulhu Mythos* skill.) This skill also gives characters the ability to spot and exploit weak spots in structures—such as where would be the best place to place dynamite to bring a building down. (*Explosives* skill, however, would be necessary to actually place and successfully detonate the explosives.) The architect would need additional skills to actually participate in the building's construction—*Engineering*, *Operate Heavy Machinery*, *Electrical Repair*, *Mechanical Repair*, and so on. **Base chance:** 05%.

ARMORER: Skill in making and repairing heavy weapons—heavy machine guns such as Gatling guns, cannons, rockets, mortars, naval guns, and so on, up to nuclear weaponry (in modern-day campaigns, although *Physics* skill would also be necessary to work with nukes). The armorer would need the proper tools to make repairs to such weapons, although he may attempt to do so using makeshift tools—but all skill rolls would be halved. Depending on the extent of damage to the weapon, more than one Armorer roll may be necessary to fully repair it, as determined by the Keeper; fewer rolls, even if successful, would result in a weapon that functions at less than full capability (negative modifiers to hit with it and the likelihood that it could explode on a particularly bad roll). To build new heavy weapons, the armorer would need access to the necessary manufacturing facilities and may also need additional skills such as *Operate Heavy Machinery* and/or *Mechanical Repair*. (To repair

electrically powered weapons such as the Vulcan autocannon, he may also need *Electronics* and/or *Electrical Repair*.) **Base chance:** 05%.

BIOLOGY: In earlier editions of the CoC rules, this skill did not exist but instead was covered by the skills *Botany* and *Zoology*. **Botany** skill enabled an Investigator to correctly identify any plant and to know or make informed guesses as to its uses or misuses. If presented with an unknown plant, he could attempt to deduce its normal habitat by rolling skill or less. He could try to name any plant known to man and also know its normal range and habitat if he made the skill roll. **Zoology** skill enabled the use to name a given animal from part of reasonable size (depending on the skill of the zoologist and the judgment of the Keeper). He could also judge the probable ecological niche and habitat of an unknown animal presented to him if he made his skill roll.

Although these two skills have been rolled into Biology skill, the Keeper may, at his discretion, choose to make each of them a specialty of the Biology skill. Thus an Investigator with *Biology (Zoology)* would have skill in identifying animals at his full skill percentage, while on with *Biology (Botany)* would have the same skill in identifying plants. Attempting to identify an organism outside his specialty area would require the Investigator to roll half his skill level or less. The Keeper could also, in modern-day campaigns, allow such additional specialties as *Biology (Microbiology)*, *Biology (Marine)*, or *Biology (Biochemistry)*—although the last could be created by averaging skill percentages in *Biology* and *Chemistry* (see above)—and so on to represent the increasing diversification in the skill today. **Base chance:** 01%.

BLACKSMITH: This skill represents the ability to work with metal to repair, create, or forge iron, steel, bronze, or other metallic items, such as horseshoes, armor, and metal weaponry (swords, ax heads, knives, and so on). It also provides the Investigator with the knowledge and use of blacksmith tools, such as hammers, anvils, forges, and similar equipment. Although the manufacturing and repair of firearms falls under either Armorer or *Gunsmith* skills, a skilled blacksmith can make minor repairs or alterations to simple firearms—casting a new barrel for a flintlock pistol, for example, or sawing the barrels off on a shotgun precisely enough not to ruin it. The Keeper would determine any modifiers to skill, such as half off in the first example and full skill in the second. A blacksmith can also cast

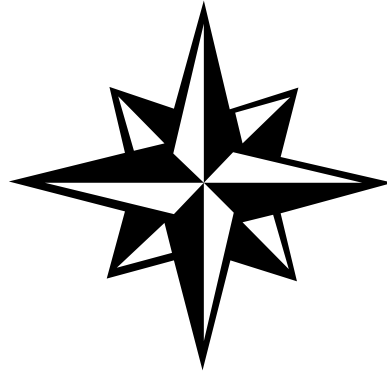
primitive cannons (medieval to Napoleonic) at full percentage in the 1890s or half skill percentage in the 1920s and today. (If he also had Armorer skill, he could use either one at full skill—whichever is higher.) Blacksmith skill is cut to one-fifth skill percentage if the Investigator is forced to work without the proper tools. Especially fine tools may add an additional +10% to skill. **Base chances:** 15% (1890s), 10% (1920s), 05% (modern-day).

BOATING: This skill is similar to the one in earlier editions of the *CoC* rules, now covered by *Pilot Boat*. This version provides a character with all the techniques of handling small boats, including rafts, canoes, rowboats, and small motorboats, beyond that of mere piloting. It doesn't include wind-powered craft using sails—*Sailing* skill is necessary for operating such craft. If more than one person is controlling a small watercraft, as may be the case with a canoe, each character must make successful Boating skill rolls to operate the craft—unless there is a commander who makes a *Shiphandling* roll instead. **Base chance:** 15% (1890s); 05% (1920s and today).

BRIBERY: This skill gives a character expertise in paying bribes—allowing him to know exactly who and how much to bribe on a successful skill roll. A failure on the roll indicates that the person he is attempting to bribe has refused to accept it and will not act as the briber desires. (He may, however, still take the bribe and do nothing, at the Keeper's discretion. Or he may even be offended at the insult to his integrity.) On a failure roll of 96-00%, the person refusing the bribe will turn the briber in to the authorities. The Keeper may, at his option, make the roll for the player to keep an NPC's true reaction a secret. On a regular failure, the briber may offer more money and try again immediately. If the second roll fails, the person cannot be bribed at that time, and the Investigator must try again at a later date if he still wishes to bribe the person.

The Keeper should determine in advance how much a particular NPC will accept as a bribe. If the Investigator offers more than the Keeper has determined is the minimum bribe an NPC will accept, the Keeper may add to the Investigator's chance of success—up to twice normal, depending on the amount; if he offers less, the success chance should be lowered accordingly, to a minimum of 5%. Successful use of other skills, such as *Administration* or *Streetwise*, may give an Investigator such insight into that person's needs

that Bribery skill percentage may be increased on the initial roll (up to double the normal skill value—but rolls of 96-00 still reflect failure, regardless of how high the Investigator's skill level is increased). Bribery skill can be used to persuade a policeman to turn a blind eye to extralegal activities, influence a judge to give a character a reduced or deferred sentence, convince an informant to nark on a buddy, and so on. **Base chance:** 10%.



CARTOGRAPHY: Skill not only in reading maps (which is also covered by the *Navigation* skill), but in drawing up accurate, to-scale maps and diagrams, including simple floor plans. Investigators with Cartography skill can create exact copies of existing maps, with no errors, as long as they make their skill rolls. They can also recreate from memory maps they've seen in the recent past. (If too much time has passed, however, or the map was seen only briefly, the Keeper may require an Idea roll as well to call up an accurate memory of the map. He may also reduce the Investigator's Cartography skill percentage in such cases, by increments of -10% to half or to as little as one-fifth normal, depending on the situation.) This skill also enables the character to correctly find locations from knowing their map coordinates (degrees and minutes) or through the use of GPS devices. (In earlier editions of *CoC*, a similar skill was called *Make Maps*.) **Base chance:** 10% [01%].

CIVICS: This skill embodies a basic knowledge of how governments work, who holds what major or local offices, how to conduct oneself while in office, and so on. This skill includes knowledge of the three branches of government, if the Investigator is American, and of such institutions of his native country as parliament, the diet, and so on, if he is not American. (A British Investigator with this skill, for example, would know that parliament consists of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and that Britain is a constitutional monarchy. He could also name the Prime Minister, at least his own Member of

Parliament, and most of the royal family.) This skill would provide knowledge of government beyond that of a simple Know roll.

An Investigator with at least a 50% skill in Civics is quite well-versed in his local government as well as at the state and national level and may even run for a minor elected office or serve as an aide or staff worker to an elected official. This skill would not, however, qualify him to run for major offices that require massive fund-raising efforts or to deal with skilled lobbyists, congressional committees, or bureaucrats; those tasks all require *Politics* and/or *Administration* skill. He also would not be skilled enough to work directly with foreign diplomats, especially in negotiating treaties, and similar tasks; that would require *Diplomacy* skill. **Base chance:** 25%.

COMMUNICATIONS: This skill imparts basic knowledge of all the major communications media of the day. For example, an 1890s Investigator with Communications skill would know Morse code and be able to operate a telegraph on successful skill rolls. He would probably also be familiar with the use of semaphores and other “cruder” means of communication.

The 1920s Investigator would be skilled in the use of wireless radio—short wave and otherwise—as well the use of ticker tape. Today, a wide range of communications technology would be available to the Investigator—television, the Internet, laser and microwave communication, and so on. (In the far future, a character with this skill would also be skilled in the use of subspace radio and other means of interstellar communications—and could “open a hailing frequency,” etc.)

Investigators with skill levels of 25% or higher needn’t make rolls for simple communications tasks, although they would to correctly read a message in Morse code, send one themselves, or find the correct frequency on a radio or transmitter to cut through static caused by jamming or other countermeasures. (A successful roll on the latter would be considered use of counter-countermeasures.) This skill also gives the Investigator some knowledge of how to repair simple communication devices (at half skill percentage maximum), although *Mechanical Repair*, *Electrical Repair*, or *Electronics* may also be necessary. The Keeper may also decree that *Computer Use* is necessary for some means of communication. **Base chance:** 10% [01% for similar skill Radio Operation].



CRIMINOLOGY: This skill imparts a knowledge of criminals and criminal society, their methods, the tools of their “trade,” and other information on the underworld in general. It also provides a knowledge of standard investigation methods: tracking down leads, finding and identifying clues, and so on. An Investigator who makes his Criminology skill roll can recognize known criminals when he sees them; recall their modus operandi; and, to some extent, predict what they’ll do next in any given case.

This skill may also give the Investigator contacts in the underworld, among the official police force, or with others who might prove helpful to him or act as sources of information. As a rule, an Investigator should have no more than one contact per 25% of Criminology skill. (A Private Investigator, Official Police Officer, Consulting Detective or Journalist, however, may always be considered to have at least one such contact, regardless of skill level.) The Keeper and/or player should determine the nature of the Investigator’s contacts, if any, before play begins, adding further such contacts as skill level increases. Some of these contacts may be easily located (local shopkeepers, police constables, and so on). For others, a roll of Criminology (or in another skill related to the contact’s status, such as *Streetwise*) may be necessary to locate them at any particular time; this is especially true of underworld contacts.

Characters with Criminology skill are also acquainted with the basic forensic-science methods of the day, capable of using, say, fingerprints (or Bertillon analysis in the 1890s) to help identify a suspect—although knowledge and use of advanced methods, such as DNA analysis, require *Forensics* skill in modern-day campaigns. Criminology skill also allows an Investigator to speak and understand criminal slang. **Base chances:** 05% for most characters; Consulting Detectives, Official Police Officers, and Private Investigators: 15%; Journalists: 10%. (**Note:** If the Keeper wishes, he may designate this skill as *Criminology/Investigation* to further emphasize its investigatory elements.)

CRYPTOGRAPHY: Skill in devising and breaking all types of codes. Investigators with Cryptography skill are especially adept in creating and breaking codes, from simple substitution codes to complex ciphers to nearly impossible-to-break computerized cryptograms. (The last also requires successful *Computer Use* rolls to crack.) In creating a code for an Investigator to break, the Keeper should apply a Difficulty Rating, from 1 to 10, to the code, with 1 being the easiest and 10 being the most difficult. To break a Level 1 code, the character may roll his full Cryptography skill percentage. To break a Level 2 code, 10% of his full percentage would be subtracted from his skill. To break a Level 3 code, he would need to roll his skill percentage minus 20% of his full skill, and so on, up to a Level 10 code, where he'd need to roll his skill percentage minus 90% of his full value. (Round off results to the nearest 5%.)

Before rolling to attempt to crack a code, the Investigator must first roll his INT vs. the codemaker's INT on the Resistance table. If he fails, the skill percentage of the character who created the code is first subtracted from the Investigator's own Cryptography skill. If the other's skill is greater than the Investigator's the code is too difficult for him to break. If not, the result is the Investigator's chance to break that code—*before* applying the Difficulty Level. If another skill is necessary in breaking the code, such as *Computer Use*, the Investigator must first make a successful roll against that skill before attempting his Cryptography roll.

The Keeper should also assign a time period to the code, indicating how long an Investigator must work on it before he can roll to attempt to crack it. These intervals could be minutes, hours, days, weeks, or even months, depending on the Difficulty Level of the code. (A Level 1 code may take only a few minutes to break; a Level 10 may take months—or longer.) As a rule of thumb, the Keeper can assign a number to each period representing the codemaker's skill divided by 10. So if a codemaker with a Cryptography skill of 60% creates a Level 10 code, an Investigator must work on it for 6 months before even attempting to roll to crack it. (The Keeper may determine how much time the Investigator must spend each day working on the code and thus how much time the Investigator has for other activities. Generally, unless it's a Level 10 code and no computer is available, eight hours is the maximum a Keeper should require.)

If a character attempting to break a code has access to a computer and can make a *Computer Use* skill roll at the start of the period required to crack the code, he must subtract his skill percentage in computer, divided by 10, from the Difficulty Level of the code, reducing it by that much, to a minimum of Level 1. This reduction is valid only for codes that do not *require* Computer Use to crack in the first place, and the same amount of time is still necessary to break the code. (Alternately, the Investigator making his Computer Use roll may subtract his computer skill percentage, divided by 10, from the number of periods he must work to attempt to crack the code with his adjusted Cryptography roll, to a minimum of one period.)

Finally, if the Investigator misses his Cryptography skill roll at the end of the first period in which he is working, he may try again. He must spend the same amount of time working on the code, but this time, his adjusted skill percentage is raised by 10% (of his original skill percentage). Each additional period he spends working on the code raises his adjusted skill percentage by another 10%, up to his full skill percentage. If he still misses his skill roll during the final period, where his skill is at full level, he cannot crack the code at all.

This is a bit complicated, so here's an example: *Secret Agent Ames Stocks (agent 11-7 of MI6) has a Cryptography skill of 60%. Nefarious spy Dr. Nein plans to steal a top-secret weapons system the British are developing. Nein has created a code with a Difficulty Level of 5 to conceal his plans—but Stocks has obtained the coded plans and has a chance to stop Nein. Because it is a Difficulty Level 5 code, Stocks' effective skill percentage to attempt to crack it is only 35%. (It's a Level 5 code, so 40% of his normal skill percentage would be subtracted before making the roll. This is 24%, which leaves a skill of 36%, rounded off to 35%.) Before attempting to crack the code, however, Stocks must make an INT vs. INT roll on the Resistance table. Stocks' INT is 16, while Dr. Nein has an INT of 18—looks bad for Stocks. But Stocks rolls an 06% and defeats Dr. Nein! Therefore, Stocks needn't subtract Dr. Nein's skill from his own before attempting to break the code. Good thing, too, as Dr. Nein has a Cryptography skill of 65%. If he'd missed the roll, Stocks wouldn't have had a prayer of deciphering Dr. Nein's plans. The odds are still against him, but Stocks gives it the ol' British try.*

Since the code is a Level 5, about medium in difficulty, the Keeper decrees it'll take Stocks' six

days to break the cipher—days because of the Difficulty Level, and six because Dr. Nein’s skill is 65% (divided by 10 = 6). The latest intelligence suggests that Nein intends to make his move in a week, so Stocks doesn’t have much time to spare—he must crack the code on his first attempt. Fortunately, Stocks has access to one of MI6’s computers, so he can attempt to even up the odds a bit. Stocks has a Computer Use skill of 35%. If he can roll this skill successfully, he can either decrease the amount of time required before he can roll to crack the code, or he can increase his percentage to crack it during the original time period. He rolls a 32%—and squeaks through. Stocks decides to reduce the difficulty level of the code rather than decrease the time required to crack it—he’s gambling everything on a single shot.

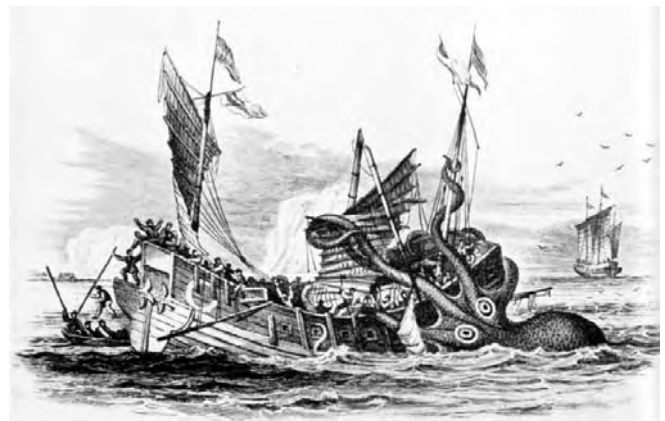
As Stocks’ Computer Use skill is 35%, he gets to subtract 3 levels of difficulty, making the code only a Level 2. His chance to break it rises to 54%—almost even odds! Stocks spends the required six days working on the code. (As he has a computer doing much of the work, the Keeper decrees that Stocks need spend only four hours a day on the code and can spend the rest of the time adventuring—as long as he’s back to the code the next day.) Stocks rolls against his adjusted skill of 54%—and rolls a 39! Stocks breaks the code, and will be waiting when Dr. Nein makes his move! (If Nein’s plans weren’t to strike for at least 12 days, and had Stocks missed the roll, he could work an additional six days and roll against his full skill of 60%, giving him a second chance to foul Nein’s evil scheme.)

If an Investigator is attempting to create a code or cipher, he must declare a Difficulty Level for the code he wants to create. He then adjusts his Cryptography skill level, just as he would were he attempting to crack a code of that Difficulty Level, and rolls his adjusted skill. If he is successful, he’s created the code and it must be broken by someone else, as described above. (The Keeper should decide how long it takes to create the code, basing the required time on the preceding guidelines for creating codes of various levels of difficulty.) If he misses his roll, the Investigator may make additional attempts to create the code, increasing his modified skill level, as above, for each attempt. (If the Keeper wishes, he may make subsequent rolls himself, in secret, so that the Investigator doesn’t know whether the code is successful or not. If a roll fails, but the character is unaware of this and decides to use it

anyway, the message he wants to convey is garbled or the information he is trying to conceal is easily deciphered.) If the Investigator who creates a code provides another character with a Key to that code, the other may decipher the code as though he had a skill level of 95%. (Of course, if the code was botched, the information derived may not be as desired. “Meet me at ten” may read as “Feed me a ton.”) **Base chance:** 01%.

CRYPTOZOLOGY: Skill in Cryptozoology enables a character to know of and identify *cryptids*—animals currently unknown to science. These would include the Sasquatch (Bigfoot), the Loch Ness Monster, the Chupacabras, the Kraken, the Mothman, the Jersey Devil, the Thunderbird, the Yeti, Mokole M’bembe, thylacines, sea serpents, various lake monsters, and many other such beasts. It does not, however, impart any knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos, even if the cryptid is also a Mythos creature. A skilled cryptozoologist could, for example, identify a large footprint as belonging to Bigfoot, but he would not know that the Sasquatch are degenerate descendents of the Voormis of ancient Hyperborea. He could identify the Loch Ness Monster, but not know that it was a manifestation of a Lloigor in reptilian form. He could also determine that a large footprint did *not* belong to Bigfoot, but not that it was the mark of a Dark Young.

Depending on the time period, some former cryptids may now be known to science and thus would fall under *Biology* or *Zoology* skill rather than Cryptozoology—for example, the okapi, which would be a cryptid to 1890s cryptozoologists, but not to those of today. **Base chances:** 01%/15% (the first % being for 1890s and 1920s Investigators; the second % for modern characters, since Nessie and other cryptids appear on TV all the time).



The Kraken—Cryptozoological Conundrum

DEDUCTION: This skill involves observing the seemingly irrelevant (via *Observation* skill) and, by subjecting what's observed to mental scrutiny in the light of pertinent knowledge, drawing certain conclusions about a particular object, person, or place. The base chance for one's Deduction skill, therefore, is the average of an Investigator's *Observation* skill, *Idea* roll, and *Know* roll. At the Keeper's discretion, however, other more-specific skills may be averaged in for the final roll, either in addition to or in place of the *Know* roll. This would reflect specific instances in which such specialized knowledge would be more appropriate than the more general information that the *Know* roll provides—for example, averaging in *Psychology* skill when trying to deduce one's state of mind from observed actions or *Geology* when a deduction depends on a knowledge of different kinds of mud.

Deduction skill cannot be increased with skill points in initial character generation except by improving *Observation* skill. It can otherwise be improved only through experience. (*Exception:* If a player chooses the Consulting Detective occupation from *Cthulhu By Gaslight* for his Investigator, he may use initial skill points to increase the basic Deduction roll—the average of *Observation*, *Idea*, and *Know*—to a maximum of 90%, provided he wants to invest that many points in it.)

A successful *Observation* roll (or, in some cases, *Spot Hidden*) must be made before attempting a Deduction roll to interpret what has been observed—unless the deduction is to be made on the basis of hearsay information and/or researched materials only. In such a case, a -20% should be imposed to the Deduction roll. If the Deduction roll is successful, the Keeper must give the Investigator at least one piece of truthful information about the subject of the deduction. For every 10% the roll is below the Investigator's Deduction skill percentage (minus any modifiers), he is entitled to one additional fact or clue, if any exist. This represents the advantage of highly developed deductive reasoning.

The Keeper may impose negative modifiers to a character's Deduction score for more obscure situations or objects about which the Investigator may not have sufficient knowledge; he should, however, keep these to himself, giving the Investigator erroneous information if he misses his roll only because of these modifiers. **Base chance:** Average of *Observation*, *Idea*, and *Know* %s.

(*An alternative use of Deduction skill:* If the Keeper would rather keep things simple, instead of making Deduction a separate skill, he may simply incorporate it into *Observation* skill, so that it becomes the single skill *Observation & Deduction*. This results in a lower initial Deduction percentage, but eliminates the need for averages and for increasing Deduction separately later.)

DIPLOMACY: This skill represents an Investigator's expertise in conducting negotiations with finesse and delicacy—in other words, in as, well, *diplomatic* a way as possible. An Investigator with Diplomacy skill can act as a mediator between two or more parties who are in disagreement over something; these could be nations arguing over trading rights, individuals fighting over a property line, organizations competing for funding—even cults differing over the best way to use a Hunting Horror to eviscerate the character.

The mediator may or may not have a stake in the outcome of the negotiations (as he would in the last case mentioned above). But he has volunteered or been assigned to attempt to hammer out the best outcome between the parties with as little fallout as possible. A successful Diplomacy roll by an Investigator acting in such a capacity indicates that one of the disagreeing parties has conceded a point or made a concession to the other (Keeper determines). A roll of one-fifth or less Diplomacy skill indicates that the negotiations have ended in the best possible outcome in the eyes of the Investigator making the roll.

(If the other party is another Investigator rather than an NPC, he can POW x 1-5% to resist, with the exact value determined by the Keeper based on how well the other Investigator made his Diplomacy roll. If both are using Diplomacy skill in the negotiations, match their skill percentage divided by 5 on the Resistance table to determine which side “wins” the negotiations.)

An Investigator with at least 50% Diplomacy skill can hold minor diplomatic posts with the government or hire out his services as a negotiator. Skill levels of 75% or higher indicate that the Investigator can hold a major diplomatic post. (Other skills are likely to come into play in any diplomatic situation—most notably *Persuade*, *Administration*, *Politics*, and maybe even *Bribery*.) **Base chance:** 10%.

DISGUISE: Disguise is the skill of changing one's appearance through the use of makeup, false beards and moustaches, wigs, and costumes. The goal of the

disguise may be to resemble some other person in particular or simply not to resemble oneself. A character with this skill who makes a successful roll when disguising himself will not be recognized by others under most circumstances. Another character who is suspicious of the disguised Investigator may attempt to see through a disguise with an *Observation* roll or a Disguise roll. Success at either of these rolls tells the character only that the Investigator (or NPC) is indeed disguised, but not his true identity.

A *Spot Hidden* roll can penetrate a disguise and reveal the character's true identity, if known to the searcher, but only after the one making the roll has first been alerted to the disguise or is searching for the disguised character specifically. Unless an Investigator states that he is looking for signs of disguised individuals before hand, he may attempt to spot and see through a disguise only if he first makes an Idea roll (or the disguised character fails his Disguise roll).

If an Investigator wishes to disguise himself as a known individual, he must first have observed that person for at least an hour and made an *Observation* or Idea roll to do so. If he fails that roll, he may still attempt to disguise himself as that person, but his Disguise skill is lowered to half its normal level for the attempt. It's also halved if he's attempting to impersonate someone well known by the individual he is attempting to fool. Characters wishing to impersonate facets of an individual other than his appearance alone need to succeed on an *Acting* skill roll as well. **Base chance:** 10% [01%].

(**Note:** This skill did not exist in *Call of Cthulhu* when this material was originally written; since it now does, feel free to ignore this version—or use it in place of the “official” version—as you please.)

DIVINATION: Skill in foretelling the future, locating hidden objects or materials, etc. It requires a “focus” of some sort to work at all—a crystal ball, Tarot cards, a pendulum, a divining rod, and so on. (Although the reading of tea leaves or palms would also fall under this skill—the focus being the leaves or the hand of the one being read.) Without such a focus, the skill drops to one-fifth its normal percentage to work at all. (**Note:** Use of these items outside the confines of the game is definitely *not* recommended.) Fortune tellers may use this skill to attempt to view the future of either themselves or others. Unless the skill roll is one-fifth or less the user's Divination skill, however, the vision of the

future or location of an object seen will be murky, cryptic, or even ambiguous—it may involve a riddle or some other statement not easily interpretable at the time. On a special success, the vision of the future or location of the object is extremely clear, and the Keeper should provide as accurate information as possible. On a normal failure, the diviner sees nothing; on a roll of 96-00%, false information is obtained. (If an Investigator is using this skill, the Keeper may, at his discretion, make the skill roll in secret so that the character doesn't know whether he's receiving accurate information or not.)

In addition to its use by fortune tellers and other prognosticators, this is the skill that one would employ to locate water or other substances with a divining or dosing rod (often a forked or “Y” shaped willow branch or a pair of “L” shaped brass rods); the chance of success in so doing varies depending on the substance sought. Full skill level would apply if seeking a common substance, such as water (known as *water witching*); for a rare or especially valuable mineral, such as oil or gold, the chance would be as low as one-fifth normal skill level, determined by the Keeper. A failed roll indicates that the diviner (or *sorcerer*) cannot find the substance he is seeking; a very badly failed roll may mean he thinks he's found it but has actually located something else instead—perhaps even something deadly, such as a buried land mine. **Base chance:** POW x 1%. (**Note:** The Keeper may, if he wishes, limit this skill to Investigators with POW 13 or higher.)

DIVING: This skill provides knowledge of undersea equipment, operations, and procedures, as well as expertise in scuba, snorkeling, and deep-diving disciplines. Investigators with this skill know how to descend and ascend to various depths without getting the bends or suffering other side effects of deep diving. They know how to fill and check oxygen tanks and how to maneuver and handle gear underwater. Half the skill level may be added to related skills, such as the chance to hit when shooting a speargun underwater (only). The Keeper may use Diving as a catch-all, overall skill for all types of diving or divide it into separate skills: *Scuba Diving*, *Deep-Sea Diving*, *Snorkeling*, and so on. (If choosing this option, general Diving skill may be used at half skill level to cover all types of diving, while one-fifth of a specific Diving skill may be applied to a different Diving specialty. (In the 1890s and 1920s the only Diving skill available is *Deep-Sea Diving*.) **Base chance:** 10%. (See also *The Bermuda Triangle*

scenario book for *CoC* for more information on the use of Diving skill and the “official” base chance.)

ECONOMICS: Skill in Economics gives an Investigator knowledge of how the financial side of life operates. He is knowledgeable in various economic philosophies such as capitalism, socialism, communism, and other economic ideologies. He understands how the free market works and the basics of supply and demand. An Investigator with Economics skill may be a whiz at various business ventures—a true entrepreneur—and is likely to have a well-rounded knowledge of the stock market and how best to work it for maximum profits. This skill could come into play along with *Bargain* skill in enabling the Investigator to best know the worth of any items or equipment he wishes to purchase, although it is *Bargain* skill that would help in the actual haggling process. He would also know the best way to approach someone—a bank or a private investor—for a loan, especially a sizeable one, and what kind of collateral he will need to secure it. (This skill is similar in nature to the Business skill in the first *Keeper’s Companion*, although it provides economical savvy beyond that necessary merely to run a business.) **Base chance:** EDU x 2%.

ENGINEERING: This new skill encompasses a number of related disciplines, covering the actual construction of various-sized structures, from small buildings to skyscrapers and from large ships (naval and civilian) to dams, factories, and complex machinery. It also covers the maintenance and operation of ship engines (from ocean liners to starships—if you’re playing a far-future *CoC* campaign). Engineering skill even encompasses the design, supervision, and inspection of mining operations, from coal mines to underground bases to undersea tunnels, such as the “Chunnel” under the English channel. Engineering skill may also be required in the building of major weapons systems, especially those that are large or complex, such as a 16-inch naval gun turret or a mass-driver.

The Keeper may allow general Engineering skill to apply to all applications covered by it, or he may, at his option, require Investigators to specialize in certain areas of the skill—for example, *Engineering (Mining)*, *Engineering (Construction)*, *Engineering (Vessels)*, *Engineering (Machinery)*, or *Engineering (Weapons Systems)*. If he chooses to go this way, Investigators would need to make a roll of half their Engineering percentage for an area outside their specialty. **Base chance:** 05%. (Oh, and contrary to

popular misconception, you don’t need to be Scottish to be an engineer.)

ETIQUETTE: Skill in dealing in and with polite society—especially how to conduct oneself so as to be accepted by that particular segment of society. It is, in short, a measure of a character’s cultural sophistication—or lack thereof. (In some circles, Etiquette skill might also be called *Savoir Faire*.) An Investigator with Etiquette skill would know how to address peers—and especially superiors—in high society and would be versed in all the correct and proper expressions and mannerisms to use in interacting with them. At formal dinners, he would know which fork to use, where to sit, and how to converse with other dinner guests around him. He would understand the use of calling cards and would be versed in the “language” of flowers—as well as when and how to call on or address a lady (or a gentleman, for a female Investigator).

Etiquette skill also gives an Investigator a basic knowledge of what *not* to do in social settings—the major *faux pas* he must avoid so as not to appear to be someone of low birth. Etiquette skill would also impart knowledge of what is acceptable and what isn’t when engaging in polite gossip, as well as a wide range of do’s and don’ts in dealing with members of the opposite sex. Any Investigator who misses Etiquette rolls in any of these situations—or who blunders on without even thinking about his conduct—may become the subject of scandal or be branded as a societal outcast or even a rogue (or, more colorfully, a dastardly blighter if an American visiting England). Once an Investigator has stepped outside the bounds of polite society by his words or actions, he must make especially good Etiquette rolls to get back in the good graces of his betters.

Etiquette skill is very culture specific—conduct that is allowed in one country may be a major breach of etiquette in even a closely related one, such as the United States and Great Britain. In such a case, whenever visiting a country with a related but different culture, one’s Etiquette skill is halved; it would increase at a rate of about 10% for every week spent in that culture (except on a failed roll), up to its maximum. In a very different culture—most African and Asian countries for American Investigators, for example—the skill would be lowered to one-fifth normal percentage at best, until the ins and outs or that culture are learned (often the hard way). In radically different cultures, Etiquette skill can also be raised with familiarity, but the rate is 05%/week—and

can never rise above half one's normal Etiquette percentage (except through actual skill increases, etc.) **Base chance:** 15% (1920s and today).

(**Note:** In 1890s England, this skill was class-based; one's social standing largely determined how educated you were in this area. Base chances for lower-class characters would be no more than EDU x 1%; for middle-class Investigators, EDU x 3%; for upper-class dilettantes and aristocrats; EDU x 4%; royals get EDU x 5%. For additional information on social classes and how they affect etiquette skill, see *Cthulhu By Gaslight*.)

EUGENICS: Eugenics skill is the human equivalent of animal husbandry—it involves the selective breeding, through genetic manipulation, of the masses of humanity, most often by a self-assigned elite. Toward the end of the 19th century, the work of advocates of eugenics research such as Francis Galton (who also was among the first to identify fingerprints as being unique with every individual and a potential means of identification) became quite popular. With the acceptance of Darwinian evolution, many scientists saw nothing wrong in using the principles of natural selection to enhance the human race, just as natural selection has worked to improve plant and animals (and humans) over millennia. The science of eugenics didn't come into disrepute until the Nazis' eugenics programs in WWII took it to its "logical conclusion" in their quest to create a master race. The discipline is now largely frowned upon, except as a theoretical discipline or in its continued use in breeding new variations in animal and plant species.

An 1890s or 1920s Investigator, however, may take the skill with none of the stigma that the post-WWII character might experience. Eugenics skill would probably come into use most often if an Investigator is trying to identify a particular variation within a species, where *Biology* or *Zoology* skill might not provide as detailed information. An Investigator with high percentages in Eugenics skill (and likely in other biological science skills) could even conduct experiments in selectively breeding—or interbreeding—variations of certain of the less-esoteric of Mythos races, maybe even combining their genetic materials with those of natural creatures. (Although why the average Investigator would do such a thing is murky, unless he fancies himself a modern-day Dr. Moreau or thinks he can somehow breed a kinder, gentler Deep One, who would then "infect" the rest of his race through

further interbreeding—or he's just plain crazy . . .) **Base chance:** 01%.

EXPLOSIVES: This represents skill in the manufacturing, arming, disarming, and safe handling of explosive devices, as well as knowledge of how to place them for maximum effect. It covers the use of dynamite, nitroglycerine, various types of bombs and fuses, and mechanical and electronic timing devices. A minimum skill level of 25% allows the routine safe handling of explosives; Investigators with a lower skill must make a skill roll during even routine handling, especially of volatile devices or substances (booby traps, mines, nitro), to avoid mishap—accidentally dropping it, setting it off, ruining a timer, and so on. The exact nature of the mishap must be judged by the Keeper. (Remember, however, that nothing spoils a campaign more than having all the Investigators blown to bits before they even *see* a monster.) A Luck roll may be made to avoid serious injury or death when fumbling the use of an explosive device.

Skill rolls are not necessary in handling or using relatively inert explosives—lighting and throwing a stick of dynamite or tossing a hand grenade, for example—unless the explosive has dangerously deteriorated. A successful skill roll when placing an explosive means it does full rolled damage; a roll of one-fifth Explosives skill means it does the maximum possible damage; failure means any damage rolled is reduced by at least half, that the explosive fails to go off at all, or that it goes off prematurely (perhaps while being set), depending on how badly the roll is missed. Any failure while attempting to disarm a bomb, mine, or booby trap sets it off. Even explosives experts must make a skill roll to avoid a mishap handling explosives under adverse conditions—hitting a bump in the road in the vehicle one is driving while carrying nitro; taking damage while carrying it; tripping and falling, and so on. (In modern or futuristic *CoC* campaigns, this skill may be known as *Demolitions*.) **Base chance:** 05% [01%].

(**Note:** this skill does *not* allow the mixing of any types of explosives themselves from their chemical components—*Chemistry* skill is needed for that. Explosives skill simply allows one to convert the explosive itself into a bomb or similar explosive device.)

FOLKLORE: Knowledge of the major folk tales and myths of various cultures, as well as universal folk motifs, both oral and written. This skill also includes expertise in gathering and cataloging these



tales and myths. A character with this skill could, on a successful skill roll, recognize certain stories he's heard as fitting in with universal folk motifs or as belonging to the folk legends of certain cultures or tribes. The Keeper could add modifiers to the skill percentage depending on how likely it is that an Investigator would be familiar with the folklore of a certain area. (For example, a Norwegian Investigator would probably be very familiar with Norse mythology, so the Keeper could add up to 25% to his Folklore percentage, to a maximum of 95%. On the other hand, if the same Investigator is attempting to identify a tale he's heard as belonging to the folklore of South Seas islanders, the Keeper could reduce his skill percentage to as much as one-fifth normal.)

Optionally, the Keeper could allow Investigators to specify that their Folklore skill is focused on a particular country or culture—for example *Folklore (Gypsy)* or *Folklore (Mexico)*. If you choose to use the skill this way, the general Folklore skill should be at best halved when trying to recall a folk tale or legend of any specific culture; a specific Folklore skill for a culture or country other than the one in which the Investigator specializes gives at best a one-fifth chance of Folklore skill to succeed—and the Keeper may determine it to be entirely useless in the situation. Folklore skill does not include knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos, occult, or primarily religious traditions; those areas are covered under their own skills. **Base chance:** 10% [05%].

FORENSICS: This is a separate skill from Criminology in the present day, since the science of forensics has come so far in the past 70 years. (But continue to use Criminology for all 1890s and most 1920s situations, although some modern forensics methods were common or becoming so in the '20s.) It includes the recognition of such techniques as fingerprinting, DNA analysis, and similar processes that can be viewed on any of the myriad *CSI* TV series. Forensic scientists should also have at least some skill in other scientific disciplines, such as *Biology*, *Geology*, and even *Medicine*, as required for any specific type of analysis. **Base chance:** 01%. (See the first *Keeper Companion* for extensive information on forensics methods, from last century to today.)

FORGERY: Forgery is skill in successfully imitating someone else's handwriting or signature; faking official forms, documents, or seals; copying

art works; or counterfeiting money. A successful skill roll is required whenever a character attempts to forge anything; success indicates that the forgery will fool all but experts or those especially familiar with the forged work. A successful roll of one-fifth one's Forgery skill or less means the forgery is so perfect that even the experts will be fooled unless they, too, make a roll of one-fifth their skill in attempting to detect a forgery. A failed roll indicates that a forgery is so clumsy, anyone will see through it on more than a casual glance (unless the forger can distract him with Fast Talk or in some other way).

A character may detect a forgery by successfully rolling his percentage or less in Forgery skill or that in *Observation* skill. An Observation roll alone, however, might tell an observer that something is strange about the forged item, but not that it definitely is a forgery. Other skills might aid a character in either creating or detecting a forgery: *Accounting*, if counterfeiting money; *History*, for a forged historical document, *Navigation*, for a phony treasure map; and so on. The Keeper should assign specific Forgery modifiers for such skill levels (for example, 2% for each 10% in the related skill) as well as the item to be forged—its difficulty, familiarity, and so forth. Optionally, the Keeper may allow specific types of Forgery skill—say, *Forgery (Art)* or *Forgery (Counterfeiting)*, for example. If so, treat the basic skill—and skill in the wrong specialty—the same as described for *Folklore* skill. **Base chance:** 10%.

GAMBLING: This skill represents expertise with various games of chance—cards, dice, roulette, and so on. More than just luck (although in some cases a Keeper may require a Luck roll as well), this skill implies a knowledge of the odds and different winning combinations in games of chance. When playing against the house, an Investigator would attempt to roll his Gambling skill to win; if playing against others, as in a card game, all participants, whether player-characters or NPCs, would attempt to roll their Gambling percentages. The one or ones who make it are the winners. If more than one player makes the skill roll, but only one winner is possible, the one with the highest Gambling skill among those who made the roll is the winner. If more than one has the same skill level, the winner is the one who makes his roll by the greatest margin.

A successful roll on Gambling skill is necessary to determine whether another character (or the house) is cheating in a game of chance. At the Keeper's discretion, *Observation* skill may also be required for

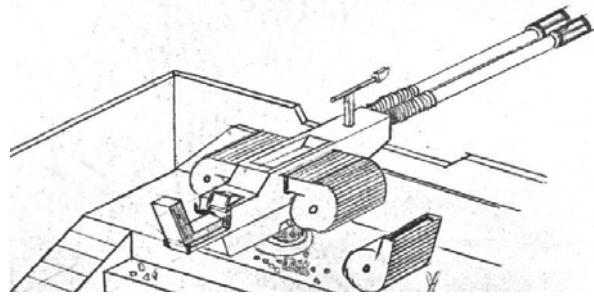
a roll to detect cheating, or it can be used alone, without Gambling skill. Observation, however, cannot detect *how* a person is cheating—only that he is. To determine how the cheating is being accomplished, enough so as to compensate for it or expose it to others, Gambling skill is necessary.

Base chance: 15%.

GEOGRAPHY: This skill provides the Investigator in-depth knowledge of the various countries and land masses of the world, beyond that possible through a simple Know roll. He would know not only that the capital of Italy is Rome, but that it was named from the legend of Romulus and Remus. He would know that, say, Uzbekistan is a former “state” of the Soviet Union but is now a separate country and even that its population is primarily Muslims. Geography skill would give an Investigator knowledge of the physical condition of a country—whether it has major mountain ranges, rivers, or similar geographical features and what their names are. He would also know at least general information about a country’s population and its economic state (although for more detailed knowledge of the latter, he’d need *Economics* skill), as well as its current type of government and perhaps even its current leader (but *Politics* skill may be necessary for details there).

An Investigator skilled in Geography could pinpoint the continent of any country, no matter how new, if he makes his roll. Rolls of one-half to one-fifth skill would provide even more details about a nation—when it was created, whether it was part of or a colony of another country, how and when it gained its freedom from the latter, whether it’s a member of the United Nations (or League of Nation, for 1920s characters), whether it’s at war with any of its neighbors, and so on. The same would be true of an entire continent or a region within a country or continent. **Base chance:** 10%.

GUNSMITH: Skill in building and repairing small firearms—handguns, rifles, shotguns, light machine guns, submachine guns, assault rifles, light grenade launchers, and LAWs, depending on the period. This skill functions in all ways the same as the Armorer skill (see above), except for small arms rather than heavy weapons. If there is any question as to whether a particular weapons falls under Gunsmith or Armorer skill, the Keeper makes the determination. **Base chance:** 05% [01%]. (See also the *Keeper Companion 2* for additional information on and uses of Gunsmith skill.)



HEAVY WEAPONS: Skill in handling and firing such heavy weapons systems as grenade launchers, LAWs, bazookas, flamethrowers, mortars, cannons and howitzers, rocket launchers, and vehicle-mounted weapons. The Investigator with Heavy Weapons skill needs to choose a specialty—for example, *Heavy Weapons (Grenade Launchers)* [including rocket-propelled grenades, or RPGs], *Heavy Weapons (Rocket Launchers)* [encompassing LAWs, bazookas, and other rockets], *Heavy Weapons (Flamethrowers)*, *Heavy Weapons (Mortars)*, *Heavy Weapons (Artillery)* [cannon and howitzers], *Heavy Weapons (Autocannon)* [20mm and 40mm, including Vulcan 20mm rotary cannon], or *Heavy Weapons (Vehicle-Mounted)*. (Note that vehicle-mounted weapons often include autocannon, howitzers, tank guns, rocket launchers, machine guns, and other types of weapons that have skills or Heavy Weapons specialties of their own. The Keeper should make the call as to what kind of vehicle-mounted weapons that specialty covers and at what skill level—for example, he could determine that the *Vehicle-Mounted* specialty gives half-skill level in all weapons that a vehicle may mount, including machine guns. Or he may restrict the full-level skill to one weapon—say, tank guns—and allow all other mounted heavy weaponry to be fired at half skill level.) An Investigator with a specialty in Heavy Weapons may use his skill to fire other types of heavy weapons, from one-fifth to half his percentage in his specialty, depending on the similarity between the two systems (Keeper determines). This skill gives some ability (half skill percentage at most) to repair a damaged weapon, as long as the damage is light. Heavy damage to these weapons requires *Armorer* skill for repairs. **Base chance:** 05%.

HYPNOSIS: Known in its earlier years as *Mesmerism*, Hypnosis skill allows an Investigator to put another person (or himself) into a trance, in which that person becomes highly susceptible to the hypnotist’s suggestions. To hypnotize someone, a character must first catch and then hold the attention

of his subject. He might do this by flashing or swinging a shiny object, such as a pocket watch, before the subject's eyes, or he may talk to him in a soothing, droning voice. To facilitate the hypnosis, it must take place in relatively quiet surroundings, away from major distractions. If these conditions are not met, the Hypnosis roll is halved before rolling for success.

To successfully place the subject into a hypnotic trance, the hypnotist must make not only his skill roll, but must also overcome his subject's POW on the Resistance table. Success at both of these rolls indicates that the subject is in a trance and will respond to and obey the hypnotist's commands. The hypnotized subject will do anything the hypnotist asks, as long as it doesn't seriously conflict with deep-set beliefs or morals (as established by previously stated beliefs and past actions in the game) or threaten the subject's self-preservation (unless he is prone to suicide).

Under hypnosis, a subject may draw on normally suppressed inner resources to perform temporary superhuman acts at the hypnotist's instigation: He may continue to act or fight until dead, without ever needing to roll against his CON for shock or unconsciousness; STR may even be increased—effectively doubled—although for *very brief* periods only.

If a hypnotist tries to direct a subject to do something that would bring harm to the subject or to commit any act that he wouldn't under normal circumstances—such as kill a friend or loved one—the hypnotist must succeed at a roll of one-fifth his Hypnosis skill and make another POW vs. POW roll. If this roll succeeds, the subject will act as he directs (although not necessarily very efficiently); if he fails, the subject will balk and has the opportunity to break free of the hypnotist's control by making half to two-thirds an Idea roll, depending on the suggestion. If successful, the subject is free of the hypnotist's control and is fully aware of what has happened to him. If a subject remains under a hypnotist's control, he cannot remember anything that happened while under control, unless directed by the hypnotist to do so.

Once a character has successfully hypnotized another and not lost control, he may add up to half his current skill level to his normal Hypnosis roll whenever attempting to put that same subject under again, and he may also increase his POW by half again for the POW vs. POW roll. A character who is

attempting to hypnotize himself may double his Hypnosis skill for success, and no POW roll is required. **Base chance:** 05%.

(**Note:** This skill was devised before the current Hypnosis skill was introduced into later editions of *CoC*. The Keeper may feel free to ignore this version, rename it as the separate skill *Mesmerism*, or use it in place of the “official” Hypnosis skill.)

INSTRUCTION: Investigators with this skill are especially adept in imparting knowledge, skills, and facts to other individuals. It can be used in several ways. In attempting to teach another Investigator a new spell, the time it takes to teach it is halved if the instructor makes his skill roll. The Investigator with Instruction skill can also attempt to teach another Investigator who's willing to learn any other skill he or she possesses. Depending on the nature of the skill—is it a knowledge skill or a physical skill?—and its complexity (History vs. Physics, for example), the Keeper should determine how long it would take for one Investigator to teach the other the skill. (As a rule, it should take at least a week, with at least an hour's instruction per day; for skills that require physical experience to learn, add another two hours a day of practice on the part of the pupil.) After the Keeper-determined period is up, both players roll for their characters.

If the instructor makes his Instruction roll and the student makes an Idea roll, the knowledge is imparted, and the pupil gains +10% to physical skills or +5% to mental skills. (If additional time is spent each week or the learning period is extended an additional week before the rolls are made, the gains are +15% to physical skills and +10% to mental skills. If the Keeper wishes his Investigators to learn new skills at a slower rate, the pupil gets +1D10 + 1D5%, +1D10%, or +1D5%, depending on the nature of the skill and the time spent.) If either roll is missed, no learning is imparted. If at anytime during the learning period the teaching is interrupted for more than a day, the Instruction and Idea roll must be made at that time; if both are successful, the teaching can continue as if uninterrupted; if either fail, no skill increases occur that period.

An instructor can teach a new skill to another Investigator to a maximum equal to the skill percentage the instructor has in the skill taught. So if Brenda, with Instruction 60% and *Ride Bicycle* 45%, attempts to teach Jill how to ride a bike, the best that Jill can learn from Brenda is a *Ride Bicycle* skill of 45%. **Base chance:** 15%.

INTERROGATION: This skill gives a character knowledge of how to obtain information under duress from unwilling characters. It includes the ability to track answers out of a subject and to obtain them through the use of mental or even physical torture, as well as the tools to use for such methods. (Investigators employing the latter, however, must make a SAN roll after each torture session for 0/1D6 SAN loss unless his current SAN is already below 20%.) The shrewd interrogator, however, doesn't need to resort to such methods and can "psyche out" the subject of the interrogation merely by sitting and staring at him for an extended period or even by seeming to befriend the subject. If torture is employed, rolls against Interrogation skill (the exact number depending on the methods and time involved, to be determined by the Keeper) are necessary to prevent causing unintended harm to the subject—and any roll of 90-00% results in the death of the subject. In addition to a successful roll against Interrogation skill to obtain each piece of desired information from the subject, the Keeper may decree that a POW vs. POW roll is also necessary to overcome the subject's resistance. Additional skills, such as *Psychology*, may also be helpful, such as in determining whether the information a subject gives is true or a lie. **Base chance:** 10%.

INVENT: This skill represents the ability to think up and create new, useful (or otherwise) gadgets and gimmicks. The exact nature of the gadgets an Investigator with this skill can invent depends to a great extent on what other skills he possesses—as well as what era he lives in. To invent new mechanical devices, for example, high skill levels in *Mechanical Repair* are necessary; for electrical devices, skill in *Electrical Repair* is required (and *Electronics* in modern times). Inventing items that require a fair grounding in theoretical science—"death rays," nuclear bombs, time machines—would require *high* levels in *Mathematics*, *Physics*, and or/other sciences. The Keeper should determine exactly what skills in addition to Invent are required in the invention of any particular item and set the inventor's success rolls accordingly.

The more removed from the science of the day is any device that a player wishes his Investigator to invent, the more difficult the roll should be—and the Keeper would be in his rights to require an Idea roll at severe penalties for the Investigator to even think up especially futuristic devices in the first place. To invent a laser beam during the 1890s or even 1920s,

for example, would require not only a great deal of time, expense, and materials (many of which wouldn't have been readily available or even in existence), but a roll of one-twentieth Invent skill would not be unreasonable. Even then, the invention should be considered a one-of-its-kind accident and probably not be reproducible.

The Keeper may also allow bonuses (or penalties) to skill levels for the amount of time an Investigator spends on inventing a device. (Unless the gadget is very simple, at least a week's game time should be the minimum.) Most devices the Keeper allows to be invented should be fairly simple ones and in keeping with the technology of the day, unless you're running a very unusual campaign (for example, an 1890s Steampunk campaign with steam-powered cars, clockwork men, and so on) or the Investigator has extremely high skill levels. **Base chance:** 05%.

JOURNALISM: This skill represents a reporter's "nose for news." It enables an Investigator to seek out and write up news stories and features in journalistic style—encompassing the who, what, where, why, and how into each piece, writing in such a manner that the information in the article runs from most important to least important (so that an editor can chop off the end to fit a column space on the paper).

A character who possesses this skill recognizes the newsworthiness of what may seem mundane to other Investigators and is likely to follow it through to its logical conclusions, no matter what the cost. An Investigator journalist is also likely to have a number of contacts and sources of information who can supply him with tips, background information, gossip, inside information, and similar resources. (Assume one contact for every 10% of Journalism skill. The Investigator and Keeper may work out ahead of time the nature of these contact, and the Keeper may generate them as NPCs as necessary.)

An Investigator with Journalism skill may also be a shrewd interviewer, getting his subjects to reveal in interviews more than they'd intended. To do so, he must roll his Journalism skill minus the INT of the interviewee. (If attempting to interview another Investigator, he must also roll INT vs. INT on the Resistance table.) Most characters with this skill will actually be Journalists, or perhaps newspaper editors, although the skill may come in handy for other, related occupations or areas of expertise—writers of current-events-related nonfiction, for example. **Base chances:** 15% for Journalists; 05% for all other Investigator types.



LINGUISTICS: This skill functions similarly to the *Linguist* skill in older editions of *CoC*. Having Linguistics skill gives an Investigator a percentage chance of speaking any common language (French, German, Spanish, etc.) at one-fifth his Linguistics skill. He may recognize the exact language and/or dialect of a speaker by rolling his Linguistics skill as well, provided that the language or dialect is a relatively common one. Recognizing more obscure tongues requires rolls at various percentages of the skill, determined by the Keeper, down to one-fifth skill percentage for extremely obscure or dead languages. A Linguist may also use his skill to determine the native tongue of a character speaking a foreign language. So he could tell that the person speaking to a clerk in Dutch was actually Russian. (This use of the skill, however, is limited by the Investigator's skill in the language being spoken; if he has Linguistics at 85% but speaks Russian at only 60%, his chance of detecting that the speaker was actually Russian would be no more than 60%.)

Just as a Linguist can recognize by listening to a speaker a particular language or language group, he can also learn that language from such exposure over a period of time. For every day in which the Investigator spends 1D8 hours listening to a language he doesn't know, he may attempt to make a Linguistics roll. If successful, the Investigator gains a 10% skill level in that language. He may thus gain skill in languages not previously known, up to the same percentage as his Linguistics skill. If he rolls 05% or less on any of the Linguistics rolls, he gets +15% in the language for that day, and he may earn up to an additional +10% beyond his Linguistics skill percentage in the language if he continues to study it. Even on shorter contact with speakers of an unknown tongue, the Linguist can begin to pick up certain words and patterns of speech—in particular, any words that don't seem to be part of the speaker's native language (such as a Polynesian speaker who uses such odd terms as “Cthulhu,” “Hastur,” and “Dagon”). **Base chance:** 01%.

LITERATURE: This skill represents an intimate knowledge of the classics of modern (and ancient) literature, including the works of Plato, Bacon, Shakespeare, Boswell, Poe, and many others (such as the King James Bible). A successful roll on Literature skill on hearing or reading a quote from an essay, play, poem, or story enables the Investigator to name the source of the quote, with exact details depending on how much the roll is

made by. If he just makes his roll, he can identify a line as being from Shakespeare or the Bible. If he makes it by half or better, he can identify the book or poem or story from which it comes. If he makes one-fifth his roll or better, he knows the context of the quote and can even recite the surrounding text. (Helpful if a quotation is a clue that requires knowledge of the rest of the text to solve.) At the Keeper's discretion, this skill may also cover contemporary popular literature, such as the works of Kurt Vonnegut or Isaac Asimov (or he may decree that to be a specialty of this skill or part of the Know roll). Other literary genres—such as science fiction, mysteries, romances, pulp magazines, and so on may also be taken as specialties of the basic Literature skill. **Base chances:** 20% (for 1890s and 1920s Investigators); 05% (for modern-day Investigators) [10%].

LORE: See *Trivia/Lore*.

MATHEMATICS: This skill encompasses talent in higher mathematics, beyond those taught in elementary school—algebra, geometry, advanced calculus, and so on. (Simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are covered by the Know roll.) Characters wishing to understand or interpret mathematical treatises or figure out the meaning of a string of calculations left on a chalkboard—or be able to fill in missing a formula in such strings—must roll against this skill. An Investigator attempting to devise a brand new mathematical theorem, perhaps to use in conjunction with the *Invent* skill, must roll at best one-fifth his Mathematics skill for success—and perhaps lower if the theory he is attempting is especially advanced or obscure. **Base chance:** 01% [for less-specialized Mathematics, $\text{EDU} \times 2\%$].

MEDICINE: In earlier *CoC* editions, three skills representing medical abilities are now part of the Medicine skill: *Diagnose Disease*, *Treat Disease*, and *Treat Poison*. If for any reason you think that an Investigator may have knowledge in only one of these areas rather than overall medical skills, consider these as specialties of that skill—for example, *Medicine (Treat Poison)*. **Base chances:** 05%.

MEDIUMSHIP: Skill in contacting, channeling, commanding, and speaking for disembodied entities, as well as in producing ectoplasm and similar ghostly effects. An Investigator with this skill, if authentic, could, on a successful skill roll, contact spirits and allow them to speak through him; exude ectoplasm from his body; initiate table tapping or rising; manifest spectral instruments and music; or cause a

host of other psychic phenomena during the course of a séance. He would also be conversant in the “language” and customs of spiritualism, especially as a “religion,” and knowledgeable of the local mediumistic community. If the medium is a fake, he or she could use this skill to simulate such phenomena (although other skills, such as *Vocal Impressions*, *Sleight of Hand*, *Fast Talk*, *Conceal*, and *Acting*, may also be necessary to fake a séance) and for the knowledge of the field that it provides. Similarly, a Parapsychologist might have skill in Mediumship indicating that he has studied the phenomenon, whether he believes in it or not. Use of a divining tool such as a Ouija Board or a Crystal Ball adds +10% for anyone with a genuine Mediumship skill of 25%+. (*Note:* The use of any such item is definitely *not* recommended for players outside the confines of the game.) **Base chance:** POW x 1%.

(*Notes:* The Keeper may, if he wishes, restrict this skill to Investigators with POW 15+, if creating a genuine medium. Anyone with a lower POW taking this skill is someone wishing to pass as a medium, although with no real abilities. [A roll of one-fifth skill, however, may put even an imposter into actual contact with a spirit, most likely resulting in his or her unwitting possession by a demon—see page 67.] For a fake medium, DEX 15+ and high levels of the skills mentioned above would be desirable. See also the M.U. monograph *The Parapsychologist’s Handbook* for more information on mediums and their practices. And see, too, *Cthulhu By Gaslight, Edition 2.1*, and *The Gaslight Companion* for information on spiritualism and séances, especially in 1890s England.)



“The spirits are restless tonight . . .”

METALLURGY: An Investigator with this skill is especially knowledgeable of metals, particularly the science of separating metals from their ores and preparing them for use, through smelting, refining, and so on. This skill would also give a character the ability to combine metals into alloys or to separate the various metals from an alloy or amalgamation. Investigators with Metallurgy skill could create molds, bellows, and other simple instruments to use in the smelting process. The skill also provides the knowledge to use and make simple repairs to various types of refining equipment (although *Mechanical Repair* may also be needed for more complex repairs or to build such machinery and *Operate Heavy Machinery* to operate it more efficiently.) Metallurgy skill also gives the Investigator expertise in mining operations, although to construct the actual mines, he’d also need *Engineering (Mining)* skill. **Base chance:** 01%



METEOROLOGY: Skill in analyzing and predicting the weather as well as using the tools of the trade (Doppler radar, computer imaging, instant communication with weather spotters, and so on). Even without access to a weather station and equipment, an Investigator with Meteorology skill could, on a successful roll, determine just by looking at cloud formations and checking the wind speed that it is likely to rain later that day. To predict the weather the following day, he’d need to roll one-half his Meteorology skill percentage or less. To predict the weather beyond that without instruments requires a roll on one-fifth skill percentage. Use of state-of-the-art tools enable predictions at full skill level out to a week; to two weeks at half skill; at one-fifth beyond that. This skill is available only to Investigators from about 1960 or so (with –20% to skill in the ’60s and ’70s and –10% in the ’80s and ’90s). Before that, use *Natural History* for weather forecasting instead, with appropriate negatives to skill for more than simple

predictions. Knowledge of overall climate theory may either be encompassed into this skill or may fall under a different skill, *Climatology* (01%). **Base Chance:** 15% [10%].

MIMIC: Skill in imitating the voices of others so that only experts or people very familiar with the person an Investigator is mimicking can tell it's not actually him. An Investigator using this skill can convincingly impersonate the voices of celebrities and/or ordinary people as long as he can study them for at least an hour and make a successful *Listen* roll. (If he misses the first roll, he can try again after another hour's listening with +10% to his skill, and so on.) The more skilled one is and the more distinctive the voice of the person he's mimicking, the easier and more convincing is the impersonation. (The Keeper may determine what sort of modifiers to add for the latter.) **Base chance:** 15%. (**Note:** This skill does not enable you to impersonate another's mannerisms—just his voice. *Acting* skill must be used for nonvocal impressions.)

MOUNTAINEERING: Skill in climbing and scaling especially steep or difficult inclines, such as mountains, cliffs, and even skyscrapers of a difficulty level beyond that possible with a mere *Climb* roll. Mountaineering skill may, in fact, be used in place of *Climb* skill, at the Keeper's discretion, in going up anything other than gentle slopes or stairs—i.e., ropes, ladders, trees, and rocks. Knowledge of rappelling techniques is covered, as is the use of various rock- and mountain-climbing tools, including hooks, grapples, rock and ice picks, spiked boots, clothing, and even breathing equipment in high-elevation mountaineering (for modern-day mountaineers). The skill can also be used in place of *Survival (Mountain)* skill, although at half Mountaineering skill percentage. Success in mountain climbing may be modified negatively by the steepness and difficulty of the grade and positively by the use of the proper equipment. The Keeper should determine such modifiers with each attempt. **Base chance:** 20%.



OBSERVATION: This is the skill of seeing and recognizing the significance of what's in plain sight that one might otherwise overlook (as opposed to *Spot Hidden*, which deals with seeing or detecting what is partially or completely obscured or hidden). The successful observer can pick out anomalies and discrepancies in someone's appearance or behavior, note small things that are out of place, pick out specific people in crowds, and so on. A successful roll on Observation skill thus allows an Investigator to note the calluses on a man's fingers that betray him as a violinist; or the mud on his trouser cuffs that indicate he's been walking through the park; or the dust on his bowler that hints it hasn't been cleaned for some time . . . and so on. (Notice that the Observation roll picks out only the physical evidence in the above examples—the calluses, mud, dust. An *Idea* roll, a *Deduction* roll, or another skill roll might be necessary to draw the correct conclusions from this observed evidence.) Use of a mechanical aid, such as a magnifying glass, adds a +10% to any Observation roll. **Base chance:** 05% (because, as Sherlock Holmes often commented, most people see, but they do not *observe*).



OCEANOLOGY: An Investigator with this skill is versed in the study of the sea and all its aspects—including oceanography, geophysical phenomena, underseas exploration, and various uses of the oceans for economic and military purposes. Keepers who see this as too broad a skill, however, may wish to create specializations for some of these areas—or even separate skills. For example, *Oceanography* may be a separate skill (or a specialization of Oceanology), covering the ocean environments, including their waters, depths, beds, animals, plants, and so on. Underseas animals and plants, on the other hand, could be covered under *Marine Biology* skill. The Keeper may also require at least some level of *Geology* skill to cover the geophysical aspects. But to aid beginning Investigators along, he could simply rule Oceanology a single skill, covering all these

areas. (Or combine it with another skill to get such variations, as described previously.) **Base chance:** 01%.



Rex is looking a mite skinny these days . . .

PALEONTOLOGY: This skill covers not only expertise in finding and recognizing fossils, as covered under the *Geology* skill, but in identifying and reconstructing such fossils into skeletal and other reproductions of the living beast. It also gives anyone with the skill knowledge of the current theories on various prehistoric creatures, including prehistoric man—even the erroneous beliefs of the time. (A 1920s paleontologist, for example, would think that the Piltdown Man actually existed.) A skilled paleontologist could also make educated guesses about a prehistoric creature's appearance, habitat, and behaviors from the fossil records, as well as when it lived. The skill also gives the character the ability to recognize and identify living fossils—including dinosaurs and the like—if such were actually to be encountered. (**Note:** Keepers who don't want to introduce this as a separate skill may continue to use *Geology* for fossils and make Paleontology a specialty of the *Biology* skill.) **Base chance:** 05%.

PERSUADE: In earlier editions of the CoC rules, two different skills represented this ability: **Debate**, which involved persuasion via logical arguments, and **Oratory**, which represented the ability to sway listeners through emotional appeal. Although it's more economical in terms of allotting skill points to combine the two in this way, it's possible that some characters—particularly NPCs—might use only one or the other method of persuasion. (Mr. Spock, for example, would always use only logical means of persuasion—Debate—and never emotional ones—Oratory. Of course, his logical mind would also snap at the illogical nature of the creatures and gods of the Mythos, so perhaps that's not the best example. Should a Keeper wish to do so, he may make the two methods specialties of the Persuade skill so that they'd appear as *Persuade (Debate)* and *Persuade*

(*Oratory*). You could still use one in which you specialize to attempt to make a persuasive cause using the other method, but your skill roll would be halved. **Base chances:** Debate 10%; Oratory 05%.

PHILOSOPHY: See *Theology/Philosophy*.

PICKPOCKET: This is similar to the skill that existed in earlier editions of CoC. It is an overtly criminal skill and allows the pickpocket to steal unobtrusively some object from the person of the victim, such as a wallet, purse, watch, or bracelet. If the object being stolen is in intimate contact with the victim (such as the watch or bracelet), the chance of success is half the pickpocket's skill level. Pickpockets can be detected by the victim if he, too, has the skill and makes a successful Pickpocket roll or makes half a *Spot Hidden* roll. **Base chance:** 05%.

PILOT BOAT: This CoC skill now covers three different skills in earlier editions of CoC: *Boating*, *Sailing*, and *Shiphandling*. Because operating watercraft often involves more than just piloting, I've added those skills back to this list. (See the respective entries for details.) In terms of the actual *piloting* of a watercraft, however, Pilot Boat skill always takes precedence over those other skills. (**Note:** This skill can also be applied to piloting a hovercraft.) **Base chance:** As per CoC rulebook.

PILOT UAV: Skill in piloting remote-control unmanned aerial vehicles. An Investigator with this skill can use remote-control equipment to pilot any unmanned aircraft at a distance, including those out of sight of the pilot. (How far he can be from the craft is determined by the Keeper.) The UAV pilot can make use of instruments, such as radar or video cameras in the aircraft, to guide his hand. The Keeper should determine an optimum range for the aircraft, beyond which modifiers to the Investigator's skill percentage are applied to keep the craft in the air and functioning as desired. Other modifiers should be applied for bad weather conditions, the presence of enemy anti-aircraft fire, and so on. Otherwise, treat it as other aircraft in determining when to make skill rolls. This skill applies to aircraft from miniature remote-controlled planes and helicopters up to Predator UAVs. (If a regular aircraft is wired for remote control, a character with this skill could pilot it as well.)

If a UAV is equipped with weapons—such as Hellfire missiles on a Predator—Pilot UAV skill is also the chance of hitting a target by remote control. (The UAV must also be equipped with a camera for the pilot to spot targets and fire weapons; if armed

with missiles, they must also have their own tracking systems to home in on the target after firing, but Pilot UAV chance is doubled to hit.) Assume that an Investigator has trained on a specific type of UAV system—models, full-sized drones, or rigged regular aircraft. On first attempting to pilot a different type of UAV, his initial skill level is halved. It increases by 10% each hour he routinely pilots the vehicle (no difficult maneuvers, combat, etc.) to a maximum of full skill level. **Base chance:** 01%.

POLITICS: Knowledge of the current and past political scenes, who's who in political parties and local government, and so on. This skill gives an Investigator knowledge of the inner workings of the political scene, providing expertise in how to drum up political support, obtain campaign funds, deal with lobbyists, read and comprehend polls and other expressions of the public will, and generally stump for political office. It also provides knowledge in dealing with government bureaucracies by using political contacts, trading in on favors, and playing hard-ball politics. Investigators with Politics skill would also have knowledge of various political philosophies such as Marxism, Bolshevism, socialism, communism, Nazism, fascism, and even liberalism and conservatism, beyond what a simple Know roll would provide.

An Investigator with at least 50% in this skill could easily run for office—and even win. Lower levels of the skill are more appropriate for campaign workers, political aides, and similar positions. A character with this skill would roll whenever dealing with the government—in particular those elected to office, although it can be of some use with nonelected bureaucrats and other professional “politicians” (lobbyists, the opponent’s campaign staff, court appointees, etc.). Other skills—such as *Administration*, *Bribery*, and even *Persuade*—may supplement the use of Politics skill, giving positive modifiers on successful rolls. Today, you could also call this skill *Political Science*. **Base chance:** 10%.

QUICKDRAW: Successful use of this skill when drawing a handgun enables the character who does so to fire his gun at the beginning of a combat round at his regular DEX, along with those who already have ready weapons. If all others have their guns holstered and do not have Quickdraw skill, or miss their skill rolls, the successful Quickdraw artist can fire before any of them, regardless of DEX. If two characters with Quickdraw skill face each other off

in a showdown, the one with the highest skill who makes his roll shoots first; if both have equal skill and make their Quickdraw roll, highest DEX fires first; if each has equal DEX, the one who made his Quickdraw roll by the highest margin fires first. **Base chances:** 01%; DEX x 1% for any Investigator with a *Handguns* skill of 50% or higher.

RIDE BICYCLE: This skill gives an Investigator the ability to ride any type of bicycle, from the Victorian Penny-Farthing (with its huge front wheel and tiny back wheel) to modern-day geared road and trail bikes, depending on the era. (A modern-day Investigator would need to roll half his skill level to successfully ride the Penny-Farthing, for example.) Unless the Investigator is injured or otherwise incapacitated in some way (inebriated, etc.), no skill rolls are necessary for ordinary maneuvers—getting on the bike, riding it, stopping, turning ordinary corners at ordinary speeds, and so on. Skill rolls would be necessary in racing the bike to attempt to chase or capture another rider, in making sharp turns at high speeds, stopping suddenly (on a dime), and jumping clear of the bike while it’s still moving. If one bike rider is chasing another and one makes his roll and the other doesn’t, the pursuer either draws closer or the pursued pulls away, depending on who made and who missed the roll. If both make or miss the roll, distance remains the same between them. If either rolls a 96-00%, he falls off or crashes the bike. A roll of one-fifth bike skill in a chase means that the chaser has caught the pursued or the chased has successfully eluded the pursuer (with the latter perhaps being cut off by a bus, etc.)

This skill may also be applied at half skill percentage to *Ride Motorcycle*, until familiarity is gained; at that point, the skill covers both vehicles equally. **Base chance:** 20%.

SAFE CRACKING: This is primarily a criminal skill (although locksmiths may have high levels in it as well). It enables the possessor to open safes or pick locks (even without *Locksmith* skill) without the benefit of combination or key. Normally, some type of tool is required to pick a lock—a specific lockpick, a pin, and so on—or to crack a safe. Characters with this skill, however, may manage to open combination-lock safes by touch (although a *Listen* roll may also be required to hear the tumblers falling into place). Very difficult locks or safes—especially those designed to be burglar proof, such as bank vaults—would add negative modifiers to this skill, as would lack of the proper tools.

Other skills may add to the character's chances to crack a safe or pick a lock—high levels in *Explosives* or *Mechanical Repair* skills, for example. This skill may also be used to disarm nonexplosive, mechanical booby traps. While *Mechanical Repair* skill alone may be used in place of Safecracking skill, the former will not impart the finesse of the latter and is more likely to leave telltale traces of tampering and other evidence that an Investigator may not wish left behind. **Base chance:** 5%; 10% for any Investigator with a Criminal background.

SAILING: This skill is similar to the one used in earlier editions of the *CoC* rules, now covered by *Pilot Boat*. It determines success in operating a boat or ship that uses sails to power the craft. As the operation of a sailing vessel involves more than just piloting, I've added this skill back to this list. In actual piloting situations, however, *Pilot Boat* takes precedence over Sailing skill. The skill encompasses all sailing craft of any size, from a two-man sail boat (or catamaran) to a multi-masted clipper ship. In larger ships that require many people to handle the sails, every crewmember must make his Sailing roll—unless the ship's commander makes a *Shiphandling* roll instead. **Base chance:** 15% (1890s); 05% (1920s) 01% (today).



SEDUCTION: This is skill in influencing members of the opposite sex to enter into romantic liaisons, perform special favors for the seducer or seductress, and so on. A successful roll will cause the object of the seduction attempt to become temporarily infatuated with the Investigator unless he or she makes an Idea roll at one-half normal percentage. (The Keeper may also require a POW vs. POW roll for the seduction attempt to succeed if the target would normally be adverse to a seducer's advances or, especially, if he or she is another player-Investigator.)

Once infatuated, the subject will attempt to please the seducer in any way possible, up to and including sexual favors. A character who has been seduced, once away from the seducer for at least a day, may make an Idea roll to become free of the seducer's

influence (unless it is reinforced by flowers, jewelry, chocolate, or other gifts, love letters, and similar romantic gestures). If that roll fails, the character has fallen hopelessly in love with the seducer and will remain so unless the object of affection is cruel, mistreats the person, or is absent for excessively long periods of time.

Once an Investigator has successfully seduced another character, it still may be necessary to make a *Fast Talk* or *Persuade* roll to convince the person to act in ways radically opposed to normal beliefs or habits; all such rolls, however, are at +20% as long as the seduced character is under the Investigator's influence. A failed roll in this case will give the seduced character another Idea roll to reevaluate the seducer's real intentions for asking such a thing, breaking the "charm" if successful. **Base chance:** APP x 3%.

SHIPHANDLING: This skill is similar to the one found in earlier editions of the *CoC* rules, now covered by the *Pilot Boat* skill. As handling seagoing vessels often involves more than merely piloting, I've added it back to this list. If actual piloting is required, however, *Pilot Boat* supersedes this skill. Skilled shiphandlers know how to run a ship or boat, making the most efficient use of both craft and crew. This skill is usable only by the captain or commander of a ship and is rolled only when the Keeper calls for it (for example, in the midst of a typhoon, to avoid capsizing in a tsunami, and so on). Shiphandling skill can help you get the best sailing speed, row the most efficiently, or take best advantage of the tides. Shiphandling is concerned with the strategies and tactics for conduct in fresh and salt water, which differentiates it from *Boating* skill. It covers all types of vessels, regardless of their means of propulsion, as opposed to *Sailing*, which concerns only the handling techniques of ships with sails. Shiphandling skill always take precedence over either *Boating* or *Sailing*, as it is a true command-level skill. **Base chance:** 01%.



SKY-DIVING: Anyone can jump from a plane, pull a ripcord, and (probably) land without serious injury, as long as he makes a successful *Jump* roll and his landing area is a soft, relatively flat piece of land. He is, however, totally at the mercy of the winds and the ground where he lands. Sky-diving skill, on the other hand, enables an Investigator not only to use a parachute at its most basic function, but also to have some amount of control over where and how he lands. This is especially true if he's using a chute with guidelines that enable him to steer it beyond that of an ordinary parachute. This skill also enables the sky-diver to maneuver in free fall to further position himself for the best landing (or to meet up with others in free fall for special maneuvers or to assist them should their chute fail to open, etc.). If a successful Sky-Diving skill roll is made at any time during a jump, the parachutist doesn't need to make the *Jump* roll on landing unless the terrain is especially rough or dangerous—by Keeper determination. Sky-Diving skill also enables an Investigator to pilot a hang-glider or other paraglider. **Base chance:** 05% (although the Keeper would be justified in lowering the base chance to 0% for 1890s Investigators—or even declare it unavailable) [as *Parachuting*, 01%].

SLEIGHT OF HAND: This skill represents the fine art of distraction—a special deftness in hand movement that enables an Investigator to perform card and other “magic” tricks and to misdirect any onlookers with one hand's movement while doing something else with another hand, effectively concealing something in plain sight or making something seem to appear out of thin air. It enables a character to escape from chains, bonds, strait-jackets, cages, and other restraints and may (at the Keeper's discretion) substitute for Locksmith skill to open simple locks—especially handcuffs worn by the Investigator. It may also substitute for *Gambling* skill to cheat at dealing cards or *Pickpocket* skill to remove items from someone's pocket or wrist—or even take the shirt off his back, literally. The alertness of onlookers and the time a character has to complete a feat will affect success, with exact modifiers to be determined by the Keeper. A slight-of-hand artist may also roll against his skill to determine how other “magicians” accomplish their own feats of prestidigitation. **Base chance:** 05% [as *Legerdemain*, 10%].

SPORTS: This is actually several skills, and the Investigator must choose to specialize in one (or

more), building up the percentage for each one separately. Among the specialties under this skill would be *Sports (Track)*, *Sports (Baseball)*, *Sports (Football)*, *Sports (Basketball)*, *Sports (Golf)*, *Sports (Boxing)*, *Sports (Hockey)*, *Sports (Cricket)*, *Sports (Soccer)*, *Sports (Tennis)*, *Sports (Skiing)*, *Sports (Surfing)*, and any other sport you can think of—even *Sports (Dodgeball)*, if you want. Sports skills can give percentage additions to certain other physical skills that are associated with that sport, as determined by the Keeper—for example, if you are skilled in *Football* or *Baseball*, you could add up to half your Sports skill to your *Throw* roll, as both games involve throwing. *Baseball* skill could also be added to your *Club* skill to hit someone with a bat, while *Boxing* skill could add to your chance to punch someone effectively. *Sports (Track)* skill could help you in running, and if you consider the sport to encompass the shot put or the javelin, it could help in throwing similar items—rocks, hand grenades, spears, and so on.

If your Sports skill is higher than the related skill—*Throw*, *Club*, and so on—you can use it in place if the Keeper agrees it to be appropriate. Note that these skills cover only the physical disciplines associated with each sport—not the knowledge of statistics, player names, odds of any team winning in a competition, and so on. These are covered by the *Trivia* skill. A Sports skill of 50% percent or more enables an Investigator to compete at the amateur level of the sport; skill percentages of 75% or more put the character into the professional leagues. **Base chance:** 15%.



SURVIVAL: Skill in scrounging for food, water, and a means to live in a vast assortment of hostile environments. Those might include *Survival (Jungle)*, *Survival (Desert)*, *Survival (Swamplands)*, *Survival (Ocean/Lake/River)*, *Survival (Forest)*, *Survival (Mountains)*, *Survival (Arctic)*, or even *Survival (Urban)*. (The last would also fall under the realm of *Streetwise* skill.) The skill can also be purchased as general Survival skill, but unless an Investigator was brought up in and is very familiar with a certain

environment, all skill rolls for specific environment are at half skill level. (Those who've purchased Survival for a specific environment would need to roll one-fifth skill level for success in a radically different environment, although the Keeper could adjust this depending on the actual environment. For example, an Investigator with *Survival (Jungle)* skill may need only to halve his rolls in forested areas, and vice versa.)

Additional skills may help out in Survival—*Mechanical Repair* for building traps and snares, *Track* for hunting game, *Swim* for diving for food, and so on—and the Keeper may add pluses to Survival skill depending on an Investigator's level in such a related area. In choosing an environment for one's Survival skill, be realistic in terms of the game: Would a character actually have the opportunity to learn survival skills in such an environment, and is it even one where he's likely to have visited—or will in the course of a *CoC* game? *Survival (Antarctica)*, for example, is marginally useful at best, not only because of the sparseness of its resources for any reasonable chances for survival but also because an Investigator is unlikely to have been in or bound for Antarctic—unless the Mountains of Madness are his goal. (Even so, *Survival (Arctic)* would be close enough for most purposes.) *Survival (Moon)* would probably be totally useless—unless playing a far-future *CoC* campaign in which our satellite has been terraformed or you're visiting the Moon's Dreamlands. *Survival (Yuggoth)*, on the other hand, could conceivably prove a useful skill at some point in a *CoC* campaign, but the odds of learning it and surviving the experience are somewhat slim. **Base chance:** 10% [01%].

STREETWISE: Skill in Streetwise means that a character is familiar with the ways and people of the streets—usually those of the rougher sections of the Investigator's home city. Successful rolls on this skill will allow characters to recognize especially unsafe areas or situations; know who is important among the street people in the area; know of indigenous swindlers, pickpockets, informants, semi-legal or illegal activities; and so on. Streetwise skill will enable characters to know where the local gambling dens, houses of prostitution, speakeasies, and opium dens are situated. Rolls on this skill are necessary to locate specific street people who aren't tied to a particular spot—one roll may be made for each hour's searching.

Streetwise skill also gives characters not born to a certain area ideas on how to deal with those who are. Thus an uptown physician who wishes to know how to approach a downtown pickpocket for information on a cult he believes is operating in the area would roll Streetwise skill to determine the best way to deal with the man—while retaining his wallet. Streetwise skill is, to a great extent, city-specific. A London-based character would be at full skill level in the streets of London, but should the same Investigator be in Chicago tracing a cultist there, he'd be at half level at best. For each week spent in the streets of Chicago, however, his skill would increase by 5% until it reached its normal level, and he'd have full skill on subsequent visits to the city. (In a foreign city where a different language was spoken, such as Paris, or where the culture is very different, as in Egypt, normal skill would be cut to one-fifth its regular chance.) **Base chance:** 15%.

SURGERY: Surgery skill represents a knowledge of medicine that goes beyond not only that of *First Aid* skill, but of *Medicine* as well. It gives the Investigator the ability to set bones in cases of complex fractures, provide detailed diagnoses in cases requiring surgery, and perform skilled operations on patients for a wide variety of conditions, from appendectomies to open-heart surgery up to brain surgery. Surgical procedures usually do require a hospital or a similar medical facility, stocked with standard operating tools (such as scalpels, rheostats, defibrillators, anesthetics, and so on). A surgeon can operate outside a hospital, but his chances of successful surgery may be lowered to up to half his skill on simple operations and up to one-fifth on complex surgeries, especially if access to surgical tools, sterilization and anesthetic equipment, and clean bandages, etc., is unavailable. (The Keeper should determine the exact chance based on the actual circumstances and the extend of the wound or condition.)

On a successful Surgery skill roll, up to 1D6 hit points may be restored—twice that on a roll of one-fifth skill or less. (If operating without proper facilities or equipment, a successful roll restores only 1D3 hit points at most.) From there, the patient heals normally as per the *CoC* healing rules. (The Keeper may, however, decree that a second surgical procedure restores up to another 1D3 points and other follow-up surgeries up to 1D2 points, if such is appropriate to the situation—and only if proper surgical tools are used in a proper facility.) **Base**



chance: 01% (or, for an actual Doctor only, half Medicine skill percentage).

TAIL: Tail is the urban equivalent of *Tracking* skill. It allows an Investigator to tail another through a crowd or even along relatively deserted city streets without being seen or losing the character he's tailing. Whenever an Investigator is attempting to tail someone, he makes his Tail roll at the start of the chase and then again anytime the subject switches streets, turns a corner, enters a building, or otherwise is temporarily out of the tailer's sight. If the Investigator fails the roll and loses sight of his quarry, he must make an *Observation* or *Spot Hidden* roll to pick up the track again. If the person being followed is looking for a tail, *Sneak* and *Hide* rolls might also be necessary for the Investigator to avoid being spotted—especially in a relatively deserted area. **Base chance:** 20%.

THEOLOGY/PHILOSOPHY: This is an in-depth knowledge of one particular religion or school of philosophical thought—or a more general knowledge of all major and most minor religions and philosophies. A player should specify the religion or philosophy on which his Investigator is most knowledgeable when the skill is purchased, as in *Theology (Christianity)* or *Philosophy (Descartian)*. He will then be at full skill level when attempting to recognize or recall the teachings, rituals beliefs, or holy objects of that particular religion (or philosophical school). He will also be able to recall or recognize those of other major religions (or philosophies) on a roll of one-fifth his skill and minor ones on a roll of one-tenth his skill. (Optionally, the Keeper may allow a player to gain a general knowledge in Theology/Philosophy skill, in which case he'd always roll at half-skill level—or less—in attempting to recognize or recall any particular Theological/Philosophical information—especially obscure facts, practices, and teachings.)

Say, for example, that a character with a skill level of 65% in *Theology/Philosophy (Christianity)* skill observes the ritual of a cult he's been investigating and makes a roll against his skill to discern whether it's related to or based on any Christian ritual. He rolls a 23% and knows that what he's witnessing has no foundation, however remote, in Christianity. Had he rolled a 12% or less, he'd also know the ritual was not Judaic, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, or any variation of these. Had he rolled a 6% or less, he'd have realized he was watching the reenactment of an ancient Druidic

ritual. This skill does *not* impart any knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos or the Occult, which are covered by their own, existing skills. **Base chances:** 05%; for members of the Clergy, 15%.

TRIVIA/LORE: This is a catch-all knowledge skill, similar to the *Art* and *Craft* skills, that can be used to simulate an Investigator's knowledge of specific items, info, facts, statistics, or unusual topics not covered by other skills (or that are more focused in scope than those skills)—for example, knowledge of baseball scores and statistics, vampire lore, werewolf lore, fairy lore, Fortean phenomena, and so on. In the 1820s and 1920s this skill would primarily be *Lore*, while in the present day, it would be *Trivia* (although there would be some cross-over, especially for sports knowledge in the '20s and some types of lore today—Fortean studies, for example).

In choosing an area of Trivia knowledge or Lore, the Investigator should check with the Keeper to make sure that knowledge of a particular area is feasible for that Investigator in that era (and location). Each area of Trivia or Lore is considered a separate one for purposes of adding skill points in character generation or skill improvement. Accordingly, an Investigator may have *Lore (Vampires)*, *Lore (Amazon)*, *Trivia (Baseball)*, or *Trivia (Spiderman)*. Not every Trivia or Lore skill may come into play in the game, but such a skill could aid in fleshing out a particular character (and, in a game such as *CoC*, you never know when you might need to know odd facts about, say, spontaneous human combustion.) This skill does not include any knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos, which falls under its own skill. General, everyday knowledge, of course, falls under the Know roll. **Base chance:** 15%.

UFOlogy: Knowledge of and skill in investigating unidentified flying objects (UFOs), i.e. flying saucers. An Investigator with UFOlogy skill knows of classic cases such as the 1947 Kenneth Arnold sighting, the Mantell incident, Roswell (of course), and various UFO *flaps* (concentrations of sightings in a particular location over a short period of time), close encounters (such as the Flatwoods Monster), and abductions (such as the Barney and Betty Hill case). The skill does not, however, give the Investigator any knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos, even though some UFO sightings may be Mythos-related (such as sightings of Yog-Sothoth as a congeries of flying spheres). A skilled UFOlogist would know of the Greys, for example, and that they are supposed to originate in the Zeta Reticuli star system, but not that

they are actually biological constructs of the Mi-Go (if you're running a Delta Green campaign, that is). He would also know about supposed locations of captured UFOs, such as Area 51, and alleged alien strongholds, such as the underground base at Dulce, New Mexico. **Base chance:** 15%. (This skill is available to Investigators only after 1947—before that year, strange aerial sightings, such as the foo fighters of WWII or the airships of the late 19th century, would fall under *Lore* skill.)

VENTRILOQUISM: Skill in “throwing: one’s voice so that it seems to be coming from somewhere else as well as in speaking without moving your lips—or moving them so slightly no one can detect it—to create the illusion that a dummy, or someone else, is actually speaking. As skill percentages increase (50%+), you can even speak “normally”

while drinking a glass of water or eating. The illusion is negatively affected by the distance that an Investigator tries to throw his voice, his difficulty in speaking (due to foreign items in his mouth, injuries to it, etc.), or the lack of a convincing prop (a dummy or puppet). The Keeper may determine exactly how such factors may influence the Investigator’s Ventriloquism skill, although it should rarely drop below half of its current percentage. Especially convincing props may even add to the skill’s percentage (from 10% to 20%, depending on the prop and the situation—in semi-darkness, etc.). An observer may attempt to detect the character’s lips moving by making a Ventriloquism roll of his own or by making half a *Spot Hidden*, with modifiers for distance, light conditions, skill of the ventriloquist, and other facts. **Base chance:** 05%.



Mythos Lesson # 2: Never take a “motor-mouth” along when hunting Deep Ones.

NEW INSANITIES AND EXPANDED PHOBIAS FOR COC

*New (and/or fleshed out) ways to drive your Investigator simply
mad—mad, I tell you!—until “they” come to take him away (ha ha!)*

This section introduces several new forms of insanity and 12 phobias with which to inflict Investigators driven over the edge by the horrors of the Mythos. As with the previous forms of psychoses listed in the *CoC* rulebook, the Keeper should choose for the Investigator the type most appropriate for the situation—for example, a character who has just gone insane at the sight of Atlach-Nacha, the Spider God, might very well develop Arachnophobia, a fear of spiders. (*Note:* Many of these insanities and phobias have been incorporated into the game since this section was originally written. The Keeper may supplement or replace those versions with the ones described herein, or he may ignore these completely. The phobias have been written up in the fashion of those given in earlier editions of *Call of Cthulhu* and in such older *CoC* supplements as *The Cthulhu Companion*; this is done for the benefit of those who, like your humble author, found such descriptions an amusing respite from the often intense nature of the game.)

NEW INSANITIES

KLEPTOMANIA: The Investigator afflicted with this form of insanity appears and acts in all ways normally, except that he has become a compulsive thief. He steals things from stores, individuals—even from friends—whenever he has the opportunity, whether he needs the stolen item or not. Often, he simply discards the stolen goods after taking them. He may not even know why he takes them (or, in extreme cases, not be aware that he does)—he just must do it. To live is to steal—even if the stolen goods are worthless. Successful rolls of DEX x 5% or less will enable the character to pilfer most items without getting caught, though Sneak or Pickpocket rolls may be required instead of or in addition to the DEX roll, depending on the exact situation and where the goods are located (such as dangling around an Investigator’s neck).

MANIC-DEPRESSIVE: The character who becomes manic-depressive alternates between states

of extreme elation and abysmal depression. In his manic state, the Investigator is easily excitable, restless, energetic, gung-ho—always raring to go, to charge into action, to rush in shooting, to go where wise men fear to tread. He exhibits a very “up” personality. In his depressive state, the character is listless, morose and negative—slow to act, reluctant to move, hangs back in combat and always fears the worst will result from any action undertaken. He may even seem bored with living. He exhibits a very “down” personality. To determine which state a character is in, roll a D6 at the beginning of each day, when the Investigator first awakens. On a roll of 1-4, the character’s state is the same as it was the day before, manic or depressive. On a roll of 5 or 6, it is the opposite of that of the previous day. The initial state, upon an Investigator first developing the disorder, should be determined by the Keeper.

MEGALOMANIA: The Investigator who develops this mental illness has an overwhelming sense of his own importance and superiority over his fellow man. He believes himself destined to greatness and is contemptuous of all other humans, whom he considers inferior and beneath him in all ways. He is destined to rule them all, to succeed where they fail. Any act he commits is justifiable, as he is God’s chosen one—or the pinnacle of evolution if not a religious man. He will use others as he finds it necessary for his own ends, but otherwise he has as little to do as possible with such lesser creatures. If somehow thwarted by one of these puny, insignificant entities, his rage will be unquenchable—and he will go to any lengths for revenge, to destroy the lowly worms who have opposed him.

OBSESSION: The character with this form of insanity has become obsessed with obtaining or possessing a certain item or class of items (Keeper’s choice). He will constantly scheme, plot, plan on how he will get his hands on the object of his obsession, how to get it away from others who might have it, or how to keep others away from it so it will

be his alone. When at last the opportunity arises to seize that with which he is obsessed, he will go for it—and will let nothing or no one stand in his way. Often the obsession creeps up upon the person slowly and is barely noticeable in its initial stages. But it grows until it is all important to its victim. In its more advanced stages, successful Idea rolls will allow the Investigator so stricken to resist the lure of his obsession—at least to the extent that he does not pursue it openly, although he will continue to plan and scheme. In extreme cases, nothing will deter the character from going after what he so fervently desires, and he will commit any crime—including murder—to obtain the object of his obsession. *Gold Fever* is a classic example of an obsession, one that might easily infect hapless Investigators who stumble upon hidden treasure in the course of an investigation.

PATHOLOGICAL LIAR: The Investigator who develops this form of insanity has become incapable of telling the truth. He lies constantly—and even believes his own lies so that lie detectors or successful rolls on *Psychology* skill are useless in detecting his falsehoods. Some inflicted with this mental disease will lie about everything. Many others, however, generally don't tell obvious lies, and not everything they say is a falsehood—just enough so that others can never tell for sure when the character is telling the truth and when he's lying. Which variant of this insanity a particular Investigator develops is up to the Keeper.

PYROMANIA: The character who develops pyromania has become fascinated with fire. He loves to watch flames flicker and burn. He compulsively chases fire trucks so that he can see the fires. And whenever he sees something combustible, unless he succeeds in a POW x 5% roll, he'll try to set it on fire. If the resulting fire doesn't seem dangerous, or even if it does and he is alone, no POW roll is necessary—he'll gleefully light things up anyway. Arson has become this character's favorite extracurricular activity.

SPLIT PERSONALITY: The character with this particular insanity has developed more than one personality. Generally, in cases of split personality, two separate, distinct personalities are involved—the character's original personality and a new, totally different persona. However, any number of new personalities (as many as the Keeper wishes to inflict upon the poor soul—up to 1D20) may exist in the same character. Normally, the two (or more) different personalities will be completely unaware of each

other's existence. Events occurring when the other personality was in control will either not be recalled at all by the personality currently in control (perhaps erroneously suggesting amnesia as the cause) or will be reinterpreted in light of how the current personality would have experienced them. For example, a seductive female Investigator whose other personality is that of a tough, hard-boiled male may reinterpret a romantic liaison in which the female persona engaged as a “night out with the boys” whenever the male persona is dominant. As a rule, both personas will share the same skills and abilities, no matter which is in control at any time. It will be only the personalities, mannerisms, habits, and so on that change as each personality becomes dominant in turn. Thus if a character is normally a reckless bravado, when his alternate personality emerges, he may become a spineless coward. In some cases, however, each personality may have its own name separate from that of the other personality, and in very extreme cases (on a badly missed SAN roll), each personality actually *will* have separate its own levels of skills and even characteristics.

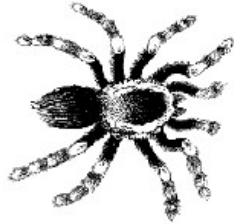
To determine which personality is currently dominant in a character, a percentile die roll should be made each day when the Investigator first awakens or whenever the character has had a particularly traumatic experience. The latter includes being knocked unconscious, experiencing a great shock, losing SAN, being severely wounded, or encountering the object of a phobia. If the Investigator has two distinct personalities, the chance is 50% that the alternate personality will take over from the one currently dominant following any roll. If more than two personalities exist, the Keeper should determine the exact chance of each one emerging—generally 100% divided by the number of personalities. (If too many to determine otherwise, roll the closest die to decide which particular personality is currently in control.)

The Keeper should endeavor to choose additional personalities for the Investigator whose psyche is fragmented with an eye toward role-playing enjoyment—what character types can the player best portray when his Investigator isn't quite himself?

NEW PHOBIAS

ARACHNOPHOBIA: Fear of spiders. Spiders are creepy, icky, hairy minions of the dark gods. They're poisonous, too, and will suck the very life

out of you if you let them. Spiders will trap you in their sticky, evil webs if you stand still too long in their presence, leaving you to struggle in vain until you die or they eat you. Flee in terror whenever you see one of these foul, eight-legged abominations or touch the clinging horror of their webs! Tell your friends to do so, too!



CYNOPHOBIA: Fear of dogs. Dogs are furred, clawed, and have fangs dripping with wretched saliva that's just certain to be tainted with rabies and other deadly pestilences. Dogs can sniff you out no matter where you hide and reveal you to the monsters that seek you. Dogs bark, and that attracts monsters, too. They carry evil, biting fleas and other parasites, which can give you plague and cause you to bloat up horribly with infection and disease. *Never* let a dog lick you—it's really *tasting* you! Call the pound—better yet, the army!—whenever you see or hear a dog! And strangle anyone who claims they're "man's best friend"—you know better!

HYDROPHOBIA: Fear of water. Water is your enemy—it will wash away all your protections against evil, your precious bodily defenses that keep corruption from touching your bare flesh! Water harbors aquatic horrors of all descriptions ready to swim up and carry you away. Even the smallest drops and puddles hide microscopic abominations of terrible power just waiting their chance to enter your body and take you over or tear you apart from the inside. Avoid sinks, showers, toilets—they are filled to the brim with water! And don't *ever* let that liquid foulness touch your body or—horrors!—*drink* it! It will surely be the death of you! (Also known as *Aquaphobia*—so Aquaman's after you, too!)

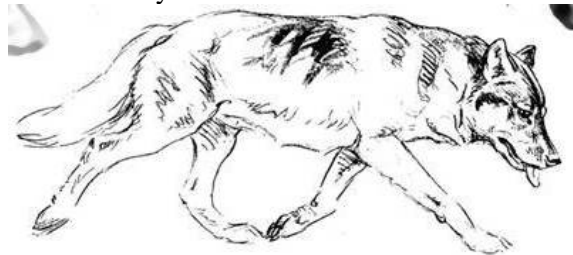
LUPOPFOBIA: Fear of wolves. Wolves are ancient, evil creatures—friends to witches, devils, and monsters. Wolves travel in packs, the better to bring you down and rip your flesh with their razor-sharp fangs and claws. Vampires can become wolves, too—and don't forget about werewolves either. Behind the beady eyes of the wolf lies an inhuman craftiness, a preternatural intelligence just waiting to usurp mankind's dominance of this planet. Flee in terror

whenever you hear the ominous howling of these unnatural, filthy, predatory beasts!

METAMORPHOPHOBIA: Fear of changing form. The very thought of becoming something or someone other than yourself—even in pretense—is dreadful to you. What if you really changed? What if you weren't yourself any more? That would be worse than death! What if you grew a moustache? Or cut your hair? Or changed your clothes? You'd be different—transformed! You couldn't live with yourself! Besides, monsters change shape all the time. You wouldn't want to be like a monster, would you? Of course not! You must avoid *any* change in form, no matter how insignificant, no matter what it takes!

MORTALITIPHOBIA: Fear of dying. You don't want to die. Death is so final! You have things to do, places to go, people to see! Fighting monsters will get you dead quicker than anything. So will weapons, reckless driving, and almost anything hard or sharp. The most horrible monsters kill you—quickly or slowly, it doesn't matter in the long run. When you're dead, you're dead. The very thought of dying sends you into a quaking fit. Avoid funerals—they remind you of your own, which is coming up far too soon for your likes. Face it—you're going to die, no matter what you do. But they'll have to drag you kicking and screaming all the way to your cold, cold grave!

ORNITHOPHOBIA: Fear of birds. Birds are evil, screeching creatures—monsters in small packages with sharp beaks, razorlike talons, and foul dispositions. Birds eat crawly bugs and squirmy worms and who knows what else?—give them half the chance, and they'll peck your eyes right out. Their feathers harbor all manner of insidious parasites. And their seductive songs will lure you to your death if you pay them heed. Birds can fly. Monsters can fly, too! Don't let these feathered horrors fly over you! Birdshot is your best friend. Use it. Liberally.



PHILOPHOBIA: Fear of love. Love is a trick monsters use to get close to you so they can *snatch*

you when you least expect it. Behind the lover's endearing smile is a horror from beyond the grave, eager to drag you down into a moldy embrace and squeeze the life out of you. Beware of and flee from those who claim to love you, especially those of the opposite sex—remember that they also claim to love hot dogs, apple pie, and roast beef, and you know what they do to *those!* Love will smother you; it will engulf you and submerge your individuality into that of another—just like some monsters do. The thought of someone loving you—even the very word—is enough to throw you into a cold, clammy sweat. Do your friends a favor—come between them and their lovers in any way you can. Just make certain they keep *their* distance!

PHYLOPHOBIA: Fear of one's own kind. Your friends, your family, your countrymen, even members of your very own race—all are plotting against you. Monsters are tricky—they'll disguise themselves as those closest to you, those most like you. Only among foreigners, strangers—those most different from yourself—are you ever truly safe. Head out for parts unknown before they get you! Do it now! And don't forget to write—as long as you mail it only to a stranger.

PYROPHOBIA: Fear of fire. Fire burns. It will slowly reduce your flesh to crumbling ashes if it touches you. Your worst enemies will laugh as they roast you over an open flame, slowly and painfully incinerating you, reducing you to a burnt crisp. Remember that Hell is filled with burning fires—and flame can send you there surer than anything. Certain monsters are born in fire, too—can you be certain one isn't being conceived right now in your fireplace or in your companion's smoldering cigarette? Extinguish all flames whenever you can—flee those you can't put out before they consume you utterly and entirely! Make certain your will stipulates that they won't cremate you when you die. That would mean eternal torment!

THEOPHOBIA: Fear of God. You are evil and you know it, and God is going to punish you for it. He can see you no matter where you hide, and He will eventually seek you out and smite you with His holy wrath. Churches are His special Holy of Holies—avoid them like the plague, as well as any priests or holy men or holy objects (especially crucifixes). After all, Cthulhu is a god, too, and you know what Cthulhu does to people . . . And you can forget about the hereafter—God will be waiting for you there, too. Face it—you can't escape God. You're doomed to

eternal damnation. Forever and ever—world without end. Amen.



(Note: Look for even more new insanities and phobia write-ups in the follow-up volume to this book, *Spawn of A Cthulhian Miscellany*.)

PHOBIAS IN PLAY, OR “GET THE IDEA?”

Occasionally, a player who has developed a phobia, either temporarily or permanently, may not be certain exactly how to react when confronted with the object of his fears. The following rules provide optional guidelines on playing out phobia-oriented confrontations:

Whenever an Investigator is exposed to the object of a phobia, the Keeper should require the player to make an Idea roll for the character. If there are several phobia-objects involved (someone suffering from apiphobia running into an entire swarm of bees, for example) or the phobia-object is particularly large or overwhelming (an acrophobic suddenly finding himself atop the mooring mast of the Empire State Building), the Idea roll may be halved, quartered, or otherwise modified by the Keeper to reflect the severity of the situation. If the Idea roll is successful, the Investigator has effectively gathered up his courage (?) and stood his ground in the face of the horrible “threat.” He must make a second Idea roll, however, or all his skill levels will be halved while he remains in the presence of the phobia-object as he quakes, gibbers, sobs, and otherwise reacts to the imagined threat. Even if he succeeds, his skills will have a -10% modifier (to a maximum decrease of half the original skill level) because of the extreme effort involved in repressing his illogical fears.

If the initial Idea roll made when encountering the phobia-object fails, the Investigator will either faint dead away or run off in a screaming panic to escape the object of his fears. To determine which reaction

occurs, the player must roll against the Investigator's CON x 5%. If the roll is higher than the Investigator's CON roll, he faints and remains out for 20-CON minutes or until revived by a successful First Aid roll. If the roll is a success, the Investigator retains his senses (what's left of them) and flees.

A character who flees from the object of his phobia may attempt to get a grip on himself once away from and out of sight of the imagined threat by making yet another Idea roll. This roll is at the normal level, even if the initial roll was modified. If he misses this roll, he will hide somewhere (or keep running until exhausted), and it will take a roll on Persuade or Fast Talk skill to convince him it's safe to come out. If he makes the Idea roll, he will be all right as long as he stays away from the object of his phobia. Should he wish, however, to return to the place where confronted by the phobia-object, he must make yet *another* Idea roll to steel himself to do. The Keeper may wish to modify this roll by -10% for each attempt by the Investigator to return to face his fears. Failure means the Investigator stays put. Success means he may return to confront his phobia-object. Unless the phobia-object is no longer present, however, the entire process begins again, with the hapless Investigator rolling against . . . well, you get the Idea.

The use of certain drugs, alcohol, or hypnotic suggestion will allow the character's effective Idea roll to be temporarily increased when determining his reaction to the object of his phobia. The exact increase should be determined by the Keeper, to a maximum of 95%; rolls of 96-00% still fail. In such cases, the Investigator is too tranquilized to react normally to the imagined threat. However, such means of overcoming phobias will almost certainly impair his normal effectiveness by lowering his skills, his DEX, and even his INT score while he is "under the influence." In many cases, this might prove even more detrimental than facing up to the phobia unaided.

Of course, if the character is unaware of the presence of a phobia-object—he is blindfolded, asleep, stupefied, etc.—no Idea roll or reaction is necessary. Unless, that is, someone else *tells* him about it . . .



HANDICAPPING BEGINNING INVESTIGATORS WITH INSANITIES

This is an optional addition to the initial Investigator generation system in which beginning Investigators may acquire additional skill points in exchange for starting the game with an indefinite insanity. The idea is to increase role-playing by giving a newly created character an inherit personality quirk, which more fully fleshes out the Investigator (for better or worse).

Any player who voluntarily gives his Investigator a major insanity during initial character generation (anything but a phobia) may apply an additional 50 skill points to his beginning Investigator's skills, to be distributed as he wishes. If the player chooses to give his Investigator a phobia, he may apply 25 additional skill points for each common phobia he chooses, and 10 skill points for each uncommon phobia. (A common phobia is one in which the object of the phobia will almost certainly be encountered at least once each game session or scenario. An uncommon phobia is one in which the object will rarely be encountered in play.) Examining the list of phobias in the *CoC* rulebook, other *CoC* supplements, and this article should make it apparent which are common and which aren't. Should any questions arise, the Keeper is the final arbitrator of which phobias are common and which uncommon.

To avoid overly handicapping an Investigator, no more than one major insanity, two common phobias, or five uncommon phobias should be allowed for any one beginning Investigator. (A mix of one common phobia and two uncommon ones may be allowed as well, if the Keeper wishes.)

To cure an Investigator of insanities taken in initial generation, it will first be necessary to "buy back" the skill points gained through taking the insanity. This is done by sacrificing some of the skill increases normally gained through experience in the game. In other words, whenever the successful use of a skill would, at scenario's end, allow a player to increase the Investigator's skill by a number of percentage points, the player records the increase separately rather than actually increasing the skill. When enough skill points are thus accumulated, the player may note that he is using them to cancel out the insanity. Even after this is done, however, the Investigator *still* must be cured of his psychosis

normally, just as if he'd acquired it in the course of play. Until he has first "bought it back," however, he can never be cured of this insanity. The Keeper would further be justified in requiring that the skill increases used for this purpose came from those skills to which the insanity-derived bonus skill points were applied, but this is up to the individual Keeper's preference.

Obviously, many major insanities in the game are unsuitable for use with this option. Catatonia, Stupefaction, Amnesia, and Pantophobia (fear of everything) would make characters virtually unplayable, defeating the purpose of the idea. However, Paranoia, Quixotism (seeing the fantastic in the mundane), and Panzaism (seeing the mundane in the fantastic); any of the new insanities introduced in this article; or any of the phobias listed in the *CoC* rules, other *CoC* supplements, or here could be utilized to give added depth to beginning characters for role-playing purposes. (And a few extra skill points never hurt either.)

CATASTROPHIC INSANITY ROLLS

Okay—sometimes SAN rolls can be a real pain in the cranium (and a few other places as well). But when you're playing a game such as *Call of Cthulhu*, with its potentially mind-blasting horrors, SAN rolls quickly become a way of life (or death). If you fail that Idea roll, after all, you may manage to hold yourself together, despite a major loss of SAN points from seeing Nyogtha chow down on your best friend.

But what if, on the SAN roll, you roll *really* poorly. I'm talking 96-00% here—the very worst roll you can get. Is it really appropriate to escape with your wits relatively intact after making such a bad, bad roll? (I see players nodding in agreement; fortunately, you Keepers are made of sterner stuff.) I say no—if your SAN roll is really catastrophic, a Catastrophic SAN Roll table is a must, even if you miss your Idea roll (or you make it, thus understanding the full horror of what you've just seen—and what you've just rolled). So roll 1D6 following any SAN roll of 96-00%. Then check the table and the descriptions that follow.

Catastrophic SAN Roll Table

1	Heart attack
2	Maximum SAN loss possible
3	Roll an Insanity, regardless of SAN loss
4	Hair turns white
5	Multiple phobias (1D6+1)
6	Split Personality

Heart Attack: What you've seen was so frightening you've had a massive heart attack. Roll CON x 5%. If you miss the roll, you've died of fright. (Although if someone with Medical or First Aid skill is handy and can make a skill roll, you may still survive.) If you make the roll or someone successfully administers first aid, you survive, but your heart is seriously damaged, resulting in the permanent loss of 1D6+1 CON. Future SAN rolls, too, are always lower than normal by the same amount to reflect your weakened condition.

Maximum SAN Loss Possible: No matter how much SAN loss you've rolled, increase it to the maximum loss possible for seeing that creature, god, or other terrifying sight, whether you make the Idea roll or not. If you do make it, the knowledge of what you've seen has literally scared you out of your wits. In addition to any insanity you develop, you permanently lose 1D3 INT points as a result. (Psychoanalysis over an extended period of time may restore 1D2-1 point.)

Roll an Insanity, Regardless of SAN Loss: You've been so shaken up by what you've seen, you develop an Insanity, even if the amount of SAN you've lost isn't enough to normally do so and even if you miss your Idea roll. Roll 1D2 and then roll on one of the Temporary Insanity tables in the *CoC* rules (1 = the Short Temporary Insanity table; 2 = the Longer Temporary Insanity table). If the insanity you roll isn't one that physically incapacitates you (stupor, catatonia, fainting, etc.), you develop it as an indefinite insanity. If it is, roll again until you roll one that is playable. Your Investigator can continue to function in the game within the parameters of that insanity or until he receives psychiatric treatment enough to cure it.

Hair Turns White: The fright you've received was enough to turn all the hair on your head, including your beard, eyebrows, eyelashes, nose hair, etc., as well as any hair on your body completely white. Unless you dye it, it remains white the rest of your life. Make a Luck roll. If you make it, you've lucked out and this is your only permanent condition. If you miss it, roll again on this table for a second catastrophic insanity.

Multiple Phobias: The shock you've received is so severe, it causes you to develop a number of fears of what are usually ordinary, everyday things. Roll 1D6+1 phobias. The Phobia Listing in the "Mental Disorders" section of the *CoC* rulebook lists 43 phobias. Roll 1D100 and divide it by two. If the

result is 1-43, take the phobia from the Phobia Listing that corresponds to that number. If the number is 44-50, roll 1D8 on the following table to get one or more of the new phobias described in this book:

1	Arachnophobia
2	Cynophobia
3	Lupophobia
4	Metamorphophobia
5	Mortalitophobia
6	Philophobia
7	Phylophobia
8	Theophobia

The phobias you end up with may not correspond to the horrors you've seen, but represent some of your own past, repressed fears that have erupted to the surface as a result of your ordeal.

Split Personality: You develop a second personality, other than your own. It may be very different from your regular personality or may be so close that the only thing that distinguishes the two is the different catastrophic insanities they develop. Yes, not only must you roll again on this table for an additional insanity, but you must roll for your new persona as well (counting subsequent rolls of 6 as 5)—you're *both* driven over the edge by this horror. Other than its insanity, roll as follows to determine the nature of your second self:

Roll 1D2: If the roll is 1, your second persona is male; if 2, it's female. *Roll 1D3:* If 1, the new persona is younger than you; if 2, about the same age; and if 3, older than you. To determine how much younger or older your second self is, roll 2D10+5 and subtract or add that number of years to your age. (If the result is younger than 5, make a younger self 5 years old—unless you don't mind playing a toddler; if the result for an oldster is younger than 60, add another 1D20+5.) If the new self is about the same age, roll 1D3 again to determine whether its younger or older than you; then roll 1D5-1 for the number of years. (If you roll 0, it's the same age as you.)

Roll 1D6-1: If 0, your second self is the same nationality as you; if 1, it's British; if 2, it's French, if 3; it's German; if 4, it's Italian; if 5, it's Asian. (If your Investigator isn't American but is already of one of these nationalities, substitute American for the appropriate other nationality.) If you roll a nationality for a language you speak, your second persona will speak in that tongue whenever it is in control; if you don't speak the language, you'll speak English with the closest accent. *Roll 1D4:* If 1, your second persona is 21st century; if 2, it's from the 1920s; if 3, it's from the 1890s; if 4, it's from another period (Dark Ages, Rome, the Future, etc.). If you roll a persona from a future age, it wouldn't really know anything about that age, but would incorporate contemporary ideas of what the future would be like into its background. An 1890s Investigator who develops a second persona that believes itself to have come from the 21st century, for example, experiences the future as envisioned by Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and similar writers.

Once you have these basics of your second self, along with its insanity, you can work with your Keeper to further flesh out your new persona's personality, skills, occupation, and so on. You should do this after the current scenario is over so as not to give away your condition to your fellow Investigators. If the first inkling they have is when your he-man 1920s Investigator suddenly begins acting and talking (and maybe even dressing!) like a 15-year-old girl from 1890s fin de siècle France, it'll make the game all that much more interesting for everyone.

IMPORTANT: Do not divulge to other players what you've rolled on the Catastrophic SAN Loss table unless it's something immediately obvious—your hair turning white or suffering a massive heart attack. Especially do not divulge the development of a split personality. And if you roll an insanity (or a new persona) that you absolutely don't think you can play, work with the Keeper to come up with an alternative.



Anyone for Skeletophobia?

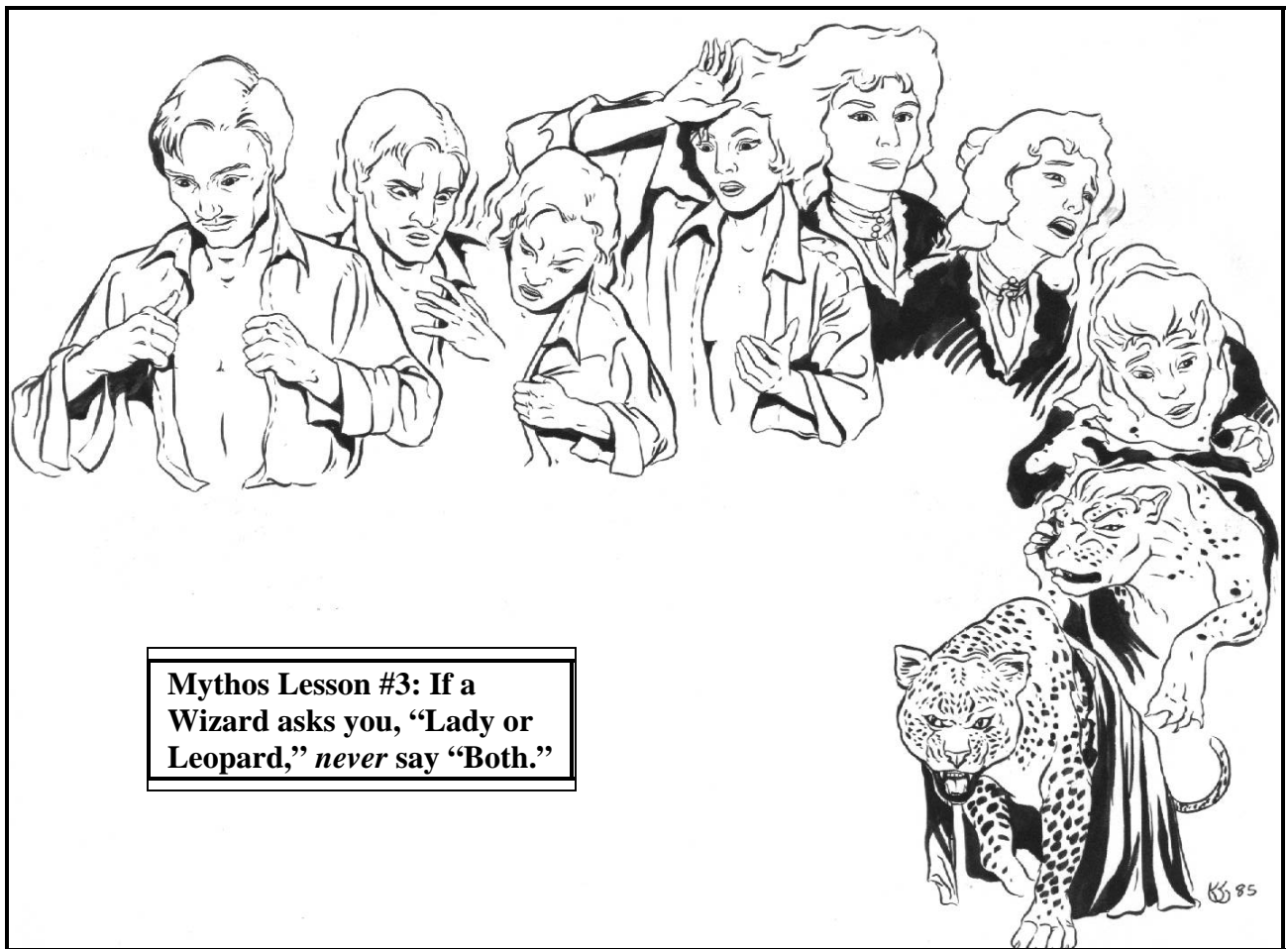
NEW SPELLS & MAGICAL ARTIFACTS

A mini-grimorie of new spells and artifacts to confound, curse, or comfort your Investigator as he slowly goes insane from their insidious use . . .

This section constitutes a mini-grimoire of new spells that a Keeper may, at his option, include as part of any existing Mythos book or occult work (or, alternatively, limit to those new Mythos books

listed in the following section). The new magical artifacts described may be inserted into a campaign whenever and wherever the Keeper deems them appropriate.

SPELLS



Mythos Lesson #3: If a Wizard asks you, "Lady or Leopard," never say "Both."

ALTER FORM: This spell enables the caster to alter in some way the shape, size, or appearance of himself or of a willing—or unwilling—subject. It may be cast anywhere at any time, the only stipulation being that the subject of the spell be in the presence of the caster, in his sight, or present by proxy—i.e., the caster has a fresh (no more than 24

hours old) lock of the subject's hair, fingernail clippings, blood sample, etc. The spell takes two rounds to cast and costs the caster 1D2 SAN and the appropriate amount of magic points for the alteration, as outlined below. If the caster is casting the spell upon an unwilling subject, he must also overcome the victim in a POW vs. POW duel for the

spell to be successful. If casting the spell on himself or a willing subject, no POW duel is necessary for success.

The amount of magic points required to alter a person's form depends both on the state of the subject and the form to which he or she is to be altered. First, an expenditure of magic points equal to the POW of an unwilling subject—or one-half the POW of a willing subject, including the caster himself—is required for *any* alteration of form, no matter how slight. Extra magic points may be required depending on the extent of the alteration. If it is to be minor—changes in eye or hair color, the removal of scars or facial hair, or any other similar changes that require no alteration of a person's SIZ or APP (or any other) characteristics—then no additional magic point expenditure is required. For each point of the subject's SIZ or APP that is to be changed, an additional magic point must be spent to effect the alteration. Otherwise minor changes that involve the entire body, such as changes in skin color or racial characteristics—i.e., the development of a golden tan or changing from a Caucasian to an Oriental—require the expenditure of an additional magic point for each alteration. More radical changes require the expenditure of extra magic points above and beyond those for SIZ and APP. Some of these changes and the point costs would be as follows:

To Change A Subject . . .

- From one sex to the other—2 MPs.
- Into a bipedal mammal (such as a gorilla or a kangaroo)—3 MPs.
- Into a quadrupedal mammal—5 MPs.
- Into a bird or reptile—6 MPs.
- Into a fish—7 MPs.
- Into an insect, crustacean, etc.—8 MPs.
- Into a plant—9 MPs.
- Into a nonliving substance (rock, earth, liquid, etc.)—10 MPs.
- Into some unearthly horror, such as a protoplasmic blob or a Mythos creature—15 MPs (or more, at the Keeper's discretion).

(Remember that these magic point costs are *in addition* to any expenditure for SIZ, APP and the subject's POW—see the following paragraphs.)

Additionally, the caster may expend magic points to temporarily increase his POW, for the purposes of the POW vs. POW duel against an unwilling subject *only*, at a cost of 2 magic points per temporary POW point increase. This additional POW is lost as soon as

the POW duel is over, whether it was successful or not.

The duration of any alteration in form that results from use of this spell is equal to the POW of the caster in *hours*, regardless of the amount of magic points expended in casting the basic spell. If the caster wants to extend the duration of the spell, however, he may, at the time of the casting, designate additional magic points to do so, expending them at a rate of 1 magic point for an additional 2 hours duration. The caster may also decree that the effect of the spell will last for a shorter period of time than his POW in hours, if he so wishes, by stating this at the time of the casting. (If he fails to state it, the spell lasts its normal duration.) This does not, however, lessen the magic point cost required for the basic spell.

Should the caster of the spell expend *twice* the required amount of magic points for the basic spell and is willing to sacrifice one permanent point of POW, the change will be permanent, lasting until another Alter Form spell is cast on the subject, either to reverse the original spell or cause a different alteration. Expending three times the magic points for the original spell and sacrificing 5 points of permanent POW, will cause the spell to be irreversible, and no further Alter Form spells will ever work on that subject again. Should the caster attempt a permanent alteration of an unwilling subject, but the POW duel is unsuccessful, only the magic-point cost for the spell is lost; POW will be unaffected.

An unwilling victim of an Alter Form spell must make a successful SAN roll to avoid a varying amount of SAN loss, dependent upon the form into which he's altered. A failed SAN roll on minor changes—hair or eye color, SIZ, and so on—results in a loss of 1D3 SAN points. More radical changes—race, sex, loss or alteration of limbs, deformities, and so on—cause a loss of 1D6 SAN on a failed roll. Being transformed into an animal of any kind loses the victim 1D8 SAN on a failed roll. Becoming a plant or an inanimate object brings about the loss of 1D10 SAN if the roll is missed. And finding oneself changed into an unearthly horror or a Cthuloid creature will result in a loss of 1D20 SAN, *plus* the maximum SAN loss, if any, for that particular type of creature. (After all, it's the victim himself who is now of so SAN-blasting a visage.) A successful SAN roll upon being unwillingly transformed still results in a loss of 1

point SAN (plus any additional loss for Cthulhian forms). Of course, if the subject doesn't realize that his shape has been altered, no SAN roll is necessary until he learns of the change.

If the subject of a form alteration was willing to be changed (including the caster himself), he will lose a maximum of only 1D3 SAN upon any major transformation if he misses his SAN roll, 1 if he makes it. Minor alterations cost no SAN loss to a willing subject. If altered into a Cthulhoid form, even the willing subject must roll for SAN loss as if seeing the creature for the first time.

(Keeper's Note: The listed magic point costs for transformations are assuming that the subject is human to begin with. If using the Alter Form spell on an animal or a monster, the Keeper should adjust the cost as necessary, taking into consideration the point cost between the current form and that to which the subject is to be changed. Changing a tiger into a gorilla, for example, may require only 2 magic points, while changing it into a human woman would cost the entire 5 [assuming it already to be a female tiger]—plus, of course any other costs necessary to be determined by the Keeper.)

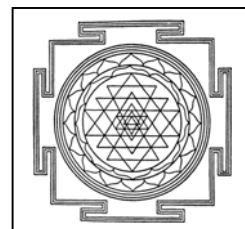
COMMAND FIRE SWARM: This variant spell summons 2D10 Fire Vampires, which the caster can command to attack one target. (He must maintain a mental image of the spell's target). The swarm will attack the designated target until it is consumed, at which time the Fire Vampires will leave. The attack is extremely precise—only the target and the immediate surroundings are affected so that only a small patch of burned ground or floor is left around the spot where the target stood. (The results could be mistaken for a case of spontaneous human—or other—combustion from the residue left behind.) The magic point cost for the spell varies, just as for a regular Summon Fire Vampire spell; for each magic point sacrificed, the chance of a successful casting increases by 10%. No existing fire source is needed, however, and while the spell is best cast while Fomalhaut is in the sky, it can also be cast at other times of the year, but with the chance for success decreasing by 10% for every month before September and after November, up to a total of -50%. Each cast of the spell costs 1D3 SAN (plus that for seeing the Fire Vampires, if successful).

CREATE LIMBO GATE: Limbo gates cost 3 POW each to create and 3 magic points to pass through, but do not lead to other gates—instead they lead to a nether dimension called, for convenience, Limbo. This shadowy plane is conterminous with

space and time and, as some hapless Investigators have learned, is not uninhabited. The advantage of such gates is that all gates leading into Limbo can be reached from Limbo, by traveling through that shadowy place and leaving through the appropriate gate. Of course, if one does not know the pathways through the various dimensions, it is quite possible to become hopelessly lost “behind the gates.” When Investigators enter any gate, they find themselves in a gray, shadowy expanse, vaguely reminiscent of a thick fog. They seem to be walking on a cloud, except that it is quite difficult to determine which direction is up or down. Entering this shadow dimension costs 0/1D4 SAN. Visible in several directions are glowing geometric diagrams hanging suspended in the air, positioned both vertically and horizontally, at all types of wild angles. These are, of course, the gates leading out of Limbo.

Exactly where the many gates emerge is up to each Keeper's fertile and devious imaginings. The arrival points should be a mixture of the exotic, the mundane, and the truly horrific. For example, Investigators might find themselves on a strangely lit world with two suns, where they emerge on the end of a high, balustraded bridge over an oddly spired city; at the other end of the bridge is standing a ridged barrel-shaped object, with thin horizontal arms radiating spokelike from a central ring. Unless Investigators had seen an Elder Thing before, they might not realize it was alive until it began to move toward them. (The gate in this particular world is scratched in the floor of the bridge.) Or they could find themselves before a herd of stampeding buffalo, emerging in an abandoned shaman ritual site. Or they may find themselves in an alien laboratory, unfathomable galaxies distant. The Keeper may use the following table as an aid to his imagination in determining where a Limbo Gate leads but should feel free to elaborate wildly.

If a Keeper feels especially cruel or that his Investigators need a challenge, he may wish to have the group's scent be picked up by the Hounds of Tindalos while traversing the gate system.



SAMPLE LIMBO GATE DESTINATIONS**1D10 Gate Exits To . . .**

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Extraterrestrial city ruled by entities resembling the Elder Things of Antarctica. |
| 2 | Paleolithic times: the lair of a saber-tooth tiger. |
| 3 | The submarine city of Y'ha Nthlei, amidst 1D6 Deep Ones. |
| 4 | The current main (human) villain's headquarters, with 1D6 cultists/thugs present. |
| 5 | The eternal caverns of Atlach-Nacha. |
| 6 | The labyrinths beneath Irem, city of pillars. |
| 7 | The ruined city of the Great Race beneath the Australian desert, now inhabited by flying polyps and worse. |
| 8 | The cyclopean cities of Yuggoth, amid 1D6 Fungi. |
| 9 | The Tibetan cavern wherein sits the pedestal of the Elephant God, Chaugnar Faugn, on the plateau of Tsang, amid 2D6+4 Tcho-Tchos. |
| 10 | Stonehenge, 2,000 or more years ago—if this gate is entered at night, 2D10+2 Druids are here, making a sacrifice to Yog-Sothoth. Otherwise, the area is deserted. |

ENCHANT COSTUME: This is a variation on the basic Enchant spell, designed to be cast on any full, man-sized costume. The spell may be cast at any time, at any place, as long as there is a costume on which to cast it. The spell will cause the wearer of the costume to take on the physical and behavioral aspects of that which the costume represents and to believe fully that he actually *is* what the costume is supposed to be. If the spell were cast on a clown costume, for example, the wearer would believe himself to be a clown and would act like one, perhaps even gaining an ability for acrobatics, juggling, or some similar clownish skill he'd never exhibited before. Or if cast on a wolf costume, the spell would cause the wearer to believe he was a wolf and to act like one, growling, howling and perhaps even attacking with tooth and claw. Of course, while onlookers may believe the man in the clown suit to be a real clown, its doubtful they'll believe the man in the wolf costume is actually a wolf, no matter *how* he acts (at least until he *bites* someone—at which point they may think he's a werewolf or simply a madman).

Casting the Enchant Costume spell requires the caster to expend a number of magic points equal to one-half the maximum SIZ of any person the costume may fit. Thus if the costume would fit anyone of

SIZES 10-14, the caster must spend 7 magic points to enchant it. Additionally, a drop of blood (or ichor) from whatever the costume represents must be placed upon it at the time the spell is cast. (This last requirement can be “worked around” by doubling the MPs spent in casting the spell.) The basic spell's effects will last one hour; each additional magic point put into the spell beyond that required for SIZ (or missing blood or ichor) extends its effect by one more hour. The spell may also be cast on an empty costume, its effects delayed until someone actually dons the outfit, if the caster expends an additional 4 magic points. Should the caster be willing to sacrifice 5 permanent POW points, along with any magic point costs, the costume on which this spell is cast is permanently enchanted and will affect anyone who ever dons the costume, its effects lasting as long as the costume is worn and as long as the suit exists. Casting the Enchant Costume spell requires 15 minutes of concentration (during which time the costume must remain in the caster's presence or sight) and costs the caster 1D6 SAN.

Immediately upon donning an enchanted costume, or at the time the spell is cast on one already worn, the wearer may match his POW against the magic points expended by the caster in enchanting the costume. If the wearer is successful, the spell does not affect him. The wearer must match his POW vs. the spell's MPs each hour he wears the costume, however, as long as the spell is in effect. On any failed roll, the spell takes him over, and he “becomes” what the costume represents as long as the spell lasts or he remains in the costume.

How much of the physical attributes of the person or creature an enchanted costume represents is endowed upon the wearer depends primarily on the costume. An Investigator who dons an enchanted costume of a Deep One will believe himself to be a Deep One, will have the STR of a Deep One, and may attack with claws as though he actually was a Deep One (at his normal Fist percentage). He could *not*, however, breath under water. This is because Deep One claws would normally be part of such a costume; gills, however, would not. Similarly, a man in a Mi-Go or Nightgaunt costume could not fly—unless the costume had wings that actually functioned under normal conditions (highly unlikely) or some other kind of spell is cast upon him allowing him to do so.

How closely the costume actually looks like what it is designed to represent has no bearing on the

effectiveness of the spell, as long as the costume is recognizable for what it is supposed to be. A man who puts on an enchanted costume that is a poor representation of a Deep One will still act as much like a Deep One as if he'd put on an extremely life-like one. The realism of the costume, however, will greatly determine whether *onlookers* believe the character is an actual Deep One—in which case, they'd take appropriate SAN losses—or someone just “clowning around” in a Deep One suit.

As long as the person wearing an enchanted costume continues to do so, the spell will affect him for its full duration. Removing the costume from the victim will effectively break the spell, although this may prove difficult to accomplish if the victim believes himself to be a monster or a wild beast (or even a very modest school marm). It may prove necessary to remove the costume by force—but until it is completely removed or literally torn to shreds, it will still affect the wearer. If an enchanted costume is removed and remains intact and it is donned again by the same person before the spell's original duration is over, it automatically affects the previous wearer once again. A new wearer would be treated as though putting the costume on for the first time, though he will be affected only for the remaining period of the spell.

Oddly, wearing an enchanted costume causes no loss of SAN on the part of the wearer—after all, he is not aware of what is happening to him, so knows of nothing wrong. He may, however, lose SAN after the spell has released him if he has done something particularly horrible while under its influence. The extent of such losses are for the Keeper to determine.

GLAMOUR: A Glamour spell gives something the appearance of something else it is not. Casting it costs a variable amount of MPs, which depends on how different the caster wants the spell's object to appear and whether he wishes to add other dimensions, such as sound, touch, smell, or even taste. Regardless of its new appearance, texture, and so on, the object of the spell retains its original substance. Thus a bottle of poison made to appear, smell, and taste as a bottle of fine brandy would still kill rather than intoxicate. If the spell is designed to radically change the appearance of the object on which it is cast, it costs 1 MP per point of original APP of the target to change. Each change in APP from its original (if any) costs an additional MP, as does each change in the appearance of its SIZ. Thus if cast on a SIZ 9, APP 12 character to make him appear

as a huge, ugly ogre of SIZ 16, APP 5, the spell would cost 26 MPs. (That's 12 MPs for APP 12; 7 to lower APP to 5; and 7 to increase SIZ to 16.) If the change is a minor one that doesn't greatly affect the APP of the object, the cost is only 1 MP per SIZ point of the object changed.

Each additional aspect of the object changed by the Glamour spell—smell, taste, texture—costs half the object's SIZ in MPs. Thus the poison to brandy illusion would cost 3 MPs for its appearance and an additional 5 (round fractions up) to give the poison the taste, bouquet, and texture of brandy. To make a living creature appear to be a wax statue would cost only its SIZ in MPs, unless one wanted it to feel and smell like wax, too. If the object of the spell is a living being who does not wish its appearance changed, the caster must win a POW vs. POW roll against the target on the Resistance table for the spell to work. The spell lasts 1 hour, plus an additional hour for each extra MP put into it for that purpose. Sacrificing a point of permanent POW will cause the Glamour to remain on the object permanently or until another Glamour spell is cast to reverse it. Certain powders and potions that work on invisible objects, such as the Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, will also temporarily dispel a Glamour spell and reveal the true nature and substance of the object under the spell's influence. Because the spell is cast on a specific object or person, photographs of that object will show it as it really is, as will reflections in a mirror, etc.

Casting the spell takes two rounds of chanting and 1 SAN point, plus the requisite MP expenditure. By spending 1 MP, the caster of a permanent Glamour spell may temporarily raise the Glamour to reveal the true nature of the object under the spell, if he so wishes.

TONGUES: This spell enables the caster or any character on which it is cast to gain a temporary fluency in a language with which he is otherwise unfamiliar or in which he lacks proficiency. The spell may be cast at any time at any place; the only requirement is that the caster or the subject on which the spell is to be cast has heard the language spoken for at least 20-INT minutes. (This can be all at once or in segments, so long as no more than 24 hours passes from the first to the last.) Once this requirement is met, the spell can be cast. Magic point costs vary depending on the language to be learned and its similarity to the speaker's native tongue. Any language that is part of the same



general language group as the speaker's native tongue may be learned though successful casting of this spell at only 1 magic point per 24 hours of fluency.

Languages that are of different language groups cost additional magic points to learn. Generally, the farther away from one's native tongue a language is, the more magic points it costs to gain fluency with it by using this spell. For example, a native speaker of English who wishes to gain fluency in German with the Tongues spell need expend only 1 magic point, because both German and English are Germanic languages. To learn French, Spanish, Italian, or Portuguese, which are Romance languages, approximately one language group "away" from English, 2 magic points would be necessary. To learn a language from the Slavic language group, such as Russian, would cost 3 magic points. An Arabic or Semitic language might cost 4 magic points. A Chinese or similar Oriental tongue, or an American Indian language, could cost 5 magic points. Learning an inhuman tongue might require as many as 10 magic points—or more! If a character has some skill in the language already (at least 25%) it costs only 1 magic point to gain fluency in the language through use of the Tongues spell. Additionally, if a character is fluent in a language other than his native tongue (a skill level at least equal to his Idea roll in the language), he may learn other languages in that linguistic group for only 1 magic point. The Keeper is the final judge of magic point costs to learn any language with this spell, should there be any uncertainty of its relationship to the subject's native tongue.

In addition to the magic point cost of this spell, the subject of the spell (whoever is to learn the new tongue) must make a successful Idea roll upon its completion. If he does so, he has gained fluency in the new tongue, to a level equal to his Idea roll, as long as the spell lasts. If he fails the roll, he is unable to grasp the new language; all of the magic points used in the spell are still expended, though the Keeper may allow the character a minimal percentage in the tongue—say, 10%—at his option. If fluency in the language for more than the initial 24-hour period is desired, the magic point cost must be doubled for each additional 24 hours of fluency. (The English speaker learning German would spend 2 points for 48 hours fluency; 4 points for 72 hours fluency; 8 points for 96 hours; and so on.) No more Idea rolls need be made, however, nor is the initial period hearing the

language required, as would be the case if the spell were allowed to end and then a new one cast.

No SAN is lost when casting the Tongues spell, unless the new tongue to be learned is an inhuman one. In that case, the character who learns the tongue loses 1/1D4 SAN point (more if the language is particularly blasphemous or horrible) as his mind struggles with such alien concepts. Keep in mind, too, that a character must be able to vocally (or otherwise, through gestures, etc.) reproduce the language to be learned. If he cannot do so, he cannot speak the language, though he can understand it.

If twice the cost in magic points is expended *in addition to* the normal cost of learning to speak a language through this spell, the language may also temporarily be read and written at the same skill level as it is now spoken. If a character casting this spell wishes to expend permanent points of POW in addition to any magic point cost, the subject may gain permanent fluency in the tongue learned. The cost in POW to learn any particular tongue permanently is equal to the normal cost in magic points to learn it temporarily.

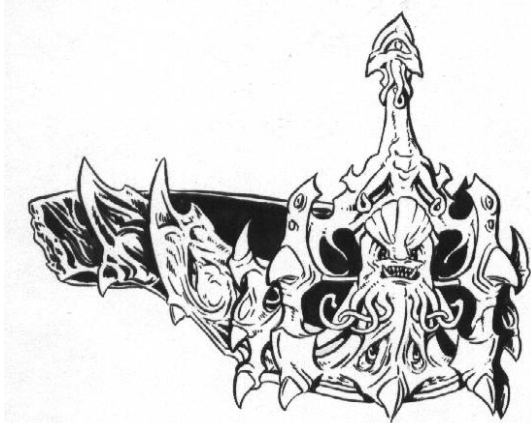
WORD OF POWER: This spell actually encompasses many different spells, all with a single ability per word—for example, to enable the caster to fly or toughen his skin to act as armor. Typically, a Word of Power will be an arcane word (or short phrase) in some ancient language—Hebrew, Chaldean, Egyptian, Assyrian, and so on—though it may occasionally be in a more modern tongue, such as Latin or Greek, or even an unearthly or inhuman language. The Word may have any capability, although each separate Word for each different task must be learned as a separate spell.

The magic point and SAN cost for each Word of Power varies by how potent the Word is. Especially powerful words might cost permanent POW as well. For example, the Word to kill could cost as much as 20 magic points as well as 5 permanent POW points (or more!), depending on exactly what it could kill, and it would cause the loss of 1D20 SAN to the caster. Such a spell would also require the caster to overcome the POW of the victim with his own POW on the Resistance table. A milder Word, such as one to lift or move objects, might cost only 1 magic point per 5 SIZ points of the object to be lifted and perhaps 1 point per 10 feet to be moved, with no SAN cost. To cast a Word of Power spell requires only a single round of uninterrupted concentration.

Its duration, when applicable, is the POW of the caster in minutes.

Words of Power rarely have any relationship between the meaning of the word in its original language and what it does when used in the spell.

ARTIFACTS



THE CROWN OF Y'HA NTHLEI: This most elaborate crown, a product of Deep One magic and science, not only signifies that the wearer is leader of all Deep Ones but actually enables him (or her) to control and command Deep Ones as well. The crown is heavy for a human head and is larger in circumference than a similar coronet designed for human wear. For a human to wear it, he must have STR of 13 or more or begin to tire after about half an hour of wear, his neck aching and his head wanting to droop. (He loses 1 point of temporary CON every hour he continues to wear it and 1 hit point every two hours, until he falls unconscious. Investigators with STR 13-16 may wear it for two hours before losing 1 point of CON temporarily and four hours before loss of a hit point. If STR is 17+, no loss occurs, and the crown may be worn indefinitely.)

Because of its size, a DEX x 5% roll is necessary to get it set on one's head so that it doesn't fall down around the ears or otherwise slip off. A similar DEX roll is necessary whenever engaging in strenuous activity—combat, running, jumping, and other sudden movements—to keep the crown on as well. (Investigators with a SIZ of 16+ may not need to make DEX rolls if they can make a case to the Keeper that their SIZ includes an especially large head.) If the DEX roll is missed, a Luck roll enables the wearer to adjust the crown easily back into position, although he must keep rolling every round he engages in such activity, unless he indicates he is holding the crown in position—which means he can do nothing else with

his hands. If the Luck roll fails, the crown has lodged itself over the character's ears and is stuck; if the roll is missed by a lot, it's covering his eyes as well.

Assuming he can wear it successfully, the crown gives an Investigator a certain amount of control over Deep Ones. The first time he encounters a Deep One, he may attempt a POW vs. POW roll against the creature to bring it under his command. The crown adds 1D6+2 to the wearer's POW for the purposes of the Resistance roll. If the roll is a failure, the Investigator loses magic points equal to half the Deep One's POW. If it is a success, he expends the same amount of POW, but the Deep One becomes his thrall for a number of hours equal to the amount of MPs spent. (If the Investigator wants to increase the time that he can command the Deep One, he may designate additional magic points for this purpose, but if he does and fails the POW vs. POW roll, he loses those as well.) From this point on, until the period is up, he may command the Deep One to do his bidding, simply by making a POW x 5% roll for each command. (If he misses this roll, the creature still follows the order as best it can, although the results may not be to the Investigator's liking. The Keeper should be especially creative in such situations.) At his discretion, the Keeper may declare that the 1D6+2 points the crown added to the character's POW for the Resistance roll may be applied to POW for this purpose, too.

Commands given a controlled Deep One may be verbal or silent—the crown gives the wearer telepathic abilities while it's worn, but these are for making commands only. The Investigator cannot hear the thoughts of the Deep One—just transfer his own to it in lieu of spoken commands. (Unless he makes a Cthulhu Mythos roll on first seeing the crown, the Investigator will not know of its telepathic capabilities until he inadvertently thinks of something he'd like to see occur—for example, wishing someone would shut up the know-it-all in the group—and the Deep One carries out his unspoken "command.")

Until the time period is up, the Deep One will follow any and all of the character's commands unquestioningly, provided the POW x 5% roll is made (or isn't a critical failure) or he commands the Deep One to do something that it wouldn't do on its own volition. For example, although a Deep One under an Investigator's command won't hesitate to attack any and all human antagonists the character

designates as a target, the same wouldn't be true if the Investigator tried to turn it loose on its own kind. On such a command, the Deep One could break free of the character's control if it makes a roll of POW x 3%. If the Investigator commanded the Deep One to do something certain to result in its death, it could also break free on a POW x 3% roll.

Once free, the Deep One will attack the wearer of the crown for his impertinence in forcing it to do his will. The wearer of the crown has one round to attempt to bring the creature back under his control before being attacked, if he has sufficient MPs left to do so. Because of the suddenness of the attack, making concentration difficult, the POW vs. POW roll is at the Investigator's normal POW—he loses the benefit of the crown's innate POW boost. If he succeeds, the Deep One is again his puppet for whatever time remains of the original period of control. If he fails, the Deep One attacks and does so before the Investigator can react further, even if his DEX is higher than the creature's. (A generous Keeper, however, may subtract 1D20 percentiles from the Deep One's attack chance to represent its respect for the crown and difficulty in attacking its wearer, even if that is a lowly human.)

Should an Investigator wearing the crown attempt to bring more than a single Deep One under his influence, the Keeper should calculate the average POW of all the creatures the Investigator is attempting to control. He would then use that in the POW vs. POW roll. The POW bonus the crown gives would be divided by the number of Deep Ones the character is attempting to enthrall, to a minimum bonus of 1 point of temporary POW. And an additional 2 MPs must be spent for each additional Deep One he wants to put under his control. If successful, the time period that the Deep Ones remain under his command is also divided by the number of creatures, to a minimum of 1 hour. Commands to multiple Deep Ones require a POW x 4% roll for 2-5 Deep Ones; POW x 3% for 6-8 Deep Ones, and POW x 2% for 9+ Deep Ones. (If he gives only one Deep One at a time an order, the roll returns to POW x 5%, but each creature he is not commanding may break free of his control on a POW x 3% roll.) Obviously, controlling fewer Deep Ones is easier than trying to turn a pack of them.

The Crown of Y'ha Nthlei is a unique item, forged by the Deep Ones eons ago, so it is unlikely that it could be duplicated. (To do so would require access to the singular metal out of which it is fashioned, plus

the sacrifice of 10 points of permanent POW and 20 magic points.) It is made of a gold alloy of some nature, but the other metal alloy is unidentifiable even by current 21st century techniques. (Some believe the gold has been alloyed with orichalcum, the metal Plato described as in use by the Atlanteans.) Although golden in appearance, hints of both green and coppery hues play throughout its surface—almost as though it were alive. (It isn't, but causing paranoid Investigators to think it is could prove amusing.) It also feels heavier than a similarly shaped coronet of pure gold would weigh.

Locating the crown could be an adventure in itself; it was recently lost by the Deep Ones (perhaps even during the raid of Innsmouth and the depth charge attack on Y'ha Nthlei in the late 1920s). No one seems to know of its location. Some believe that it was lost altogether, while others think it lies in the ruins of the blighted town of Innsmouth. Others believe that it was found and now either resides in an antiquarian's private collection or in the hands of one of any number of Mythos-worshipping cults. (It's unlikely that the Order of Dagon has it, or it would have been returned to the Deep Ones.) Since the crown's loss, and with it the authority that its designated wearer had over its fellow Deep Ones, Dagon and Hydra have taken a much more active leadership roll in Deep One society than they had before. These two ancient beings would be very happy to see the crown returned to its rightful owners—and would dog any Investigator known to possess it until he either returns it or is dead.

(Optional: Continually wearing the Crown of Y'ha Nthlei for long periods may prove hazardous to an Investigator in another way. If a character wears the crown for more than half the period he can control a particular Deep One or group of the creatures (minimum 2 hours), the Keeper should make a secret roll. If the result is 96-00, the crown "infects" the character. Within 24 hours, he begins to change physically, his skin becoming rough and scaly and his eyes taking on a protruding fish-eyed appearance—in short, he starts to demonstrate the Innsmouth look. Unless he receives some kind of magical assistance, over the course of the next few weeks, the Investigator will continue to change, finally becoming a Deep One himself. [Ironically, at that point, someone else wearing the crown can command him.] The Keeper should continue to roll as long as the Investigator continues to wear the crown for periods of the same length. This time, the

infection occurs on a roll of 90-00. If necessary to make a third roll, the wearer is infected on 85-00, and so on, as long as the crown isn't removed. Whether a means exists to restore the Investigator's humanity or not—and how to obtain it, if so—is up to the Keeper.)



FIRE VAMPIRE CHARM: This is a magic item originating in Ponape, in the South Seas. It is made from black volcanic rock polished to a glossy sheen and attached to a plain golden chain. Such a charm can be created only by one who knows both the Summon and Bind Flame Vampire spells and who invests 15 points of permanent POW into its creation. The charm must be created in an area of extreme heat, such as in the caldera of a live volcano or in the midst of a raging forest fire. Fomalhaut must be in the skies at the time of the charm's creation as well, for in effect, the creation of the charm permanently binds the essence of 1D6 Fire Vampires to the bauble. (It can thus be used even when Fomalhaut is not in the skies.) The wearer of the charm may summon and bind Fire Vampires as though he knew the appropriate spells; no MP vs. MP duel is required by the wearer of the amulet to control Fire Vampires that are summoned—as long as the amulet is in his possession. (If the Keeper chooses, and the task the wearer gives the Fire Vampires difficult, he may require a POW x 5% roll for the creatures to successfully act as directed.) The charm also totally protects the wearer from the attack and effects of any Fire Vampire, as well as damage by any flame while wearing it—including the pain normally caused by a Cloak of Fire spell. (It is possible it may also protect from other types of extreme heat-based damage, too, such as that caused by, say, a Martian Heat Ray—should its bearer somehow wind up in a “war of the worlds”—or the heat of a volcano, forest fire, or blast furnace. The Keeper may determine whether such protection is even possible and, if so, just how much protection the charm affords the wearer.)

Additionally, the charm enables the wielder to set “booby traps” that will go off under designated circumstances, engulfing any item so set in white-hot flame. Such circumstances as the item being removed from a certain area by anyone other than the owner of

the amulet would be one possible use. For each MP put into the trap, the object so treated will burn with a flame capable of doing 1D10 points of damage per round to anyone touching it and 1D4 to anyone within three feet of the flame. The flame will continue until the item so treated is completely consumed (unless it is the charm itself) or the person touching it dead. The trap can be set for a delayed activation as well. Each MP designated for the purpose will cause up to a one-hour delay after the conditions of activation are triggered. After the trap is activated, the charm “calls out” psychically to its current owner so that he can locate it and take possession of it again.

The last known possessor of a Fire Vampire Charm was an evil madam in London's East End, near the end of the Victorian period. After she was absorbed by the Great Old One Y'gononac, that charm disappeared. Some say it fell into the possession of an old sea dog, who keeps it as a good luck charm to ward off evil on some of his less-orthodox excursions on the seven seas.

THE HEART OF YOG-SOTHOTH: This is a magical artifact that is believed to contain a minute part of the substance of the Outer God for which it is named. In appearance, it is a small, translucent, glowing, heart-shaped stone, about the size of an apricot pit. In its interior can be viewed a series of constantly shifting, multi-hued colors that seem to capture the heart and mind of whomever gazes into its seemingly fathomless depths. Once an Investigator or other character has peered into the Heart of Yog-Sothoth, he must make a roll of POW x 3% to avoid being captivated by its unearthly beauty and sacrificing a permanent magic point to power the artifact. (This MP cannot be regained, except perhaps through other magical means; even if the character increases his POW, his magic point total remains at POW-1.) Once powered, the Heart will glow brightly with a single color, and both it and its bearer will disappear into the time continuum, along with anyone else in proximity to the Heart's possessor. (This would be anyone within the bearer's POW in feet—make a Luck roll if there's any question.) If a character knows what the Heart will do and uses it voluntarily, he needn't make the POW x 3% roll, although he still loses the MP. Use of the Heart in this way, voluntarily or otherwise, costs the bearer 1/1D4 SAN as soon as he's realized that he's traveled through time. Anyone caught in the Heart's aura and transported through

time along with the bearer must make the SAN roll, although only the possessor of the Heart—or more correctly, the possessed (if not used voluntarily)—loses the magic point for activating the Heart.

Should a character retain his SAN and enough magic points to do so, eventually he can learn to control the Heart by causing it to glow with a certain color—each particular color sending the user to a different era in time. A character must roll POW x 1% after a use of the Heart to learn how to control its mystic, temporal powers. Until he has done so, the possessor (and anyone along for the ride) is at the complete mercy of the Heart of Yog-Sothoth (i.e., the Keeper) as to where he goes in any of his travels through time. (The Keeper may, at his discretion, allow +2 to be added to the POW roll for controlling the Heart for every attempt after the first, to a maximum of POW x 2%.) The Keeper may designate an era for each color (or shade or hue thereof) as he wishes, or use the following table in a pinch:

Red = Far Future
Orange = 21 st Century*
Yellow = 1920s/30s*
Green = Victorian Era (1890s)*
Blue = Dark Ages
Purple = Roman Empire
(* If starting from this era, this color goes to the time of Atlantis instead.)

(Once an Investigator has been taken to a certain time by a color within the Heart, the same color then returns him to his starting point.)

No one knows exactly how the Heart of Yog-Sothoth was forged—perhaps it was a fragment of a prison created by the Elder Gods to contain the All-in-One, who subsequently broke free, leaving a piece of itself in the Heart. Perhaps it was actually forged by the great sorcerers of Atlantis or Hyperborea. As mysterious as its origin is its current whereabouts. It is spoken of in many of the Mythos books that discuss wanderings through time and other dimensions, but where it now resides is unknown. According to conflicting rumors among the occult community, it is currently to be found buried in one of several vaults beneath Irem, City of Pillars—or perhaps in the Nameless City instead. Some say it is to be found only in the Dreamlands; others claim that it was once in the possession of the Great Beast, Aleister Crowley and disappeared when he died. Others place it in possession of one Dr. Laban Shrewsbury, late of Miskatonic University.



STARSTONES OF MNAR: These magical artifacts appear to be small medallions carved in the shape of five-pointed stars from a greenish-gray stone. The stone is similar in feel and composition to polished soapstone but is actually alien to this world. Starstones act as magical wards against attack or interference against the wearer by minions of the Mythos and certain other supernatural beings. They even seem to have a limited effectiveness in at least slowing down some major creatures and even minor deities of the Mythos—Cthonians in particular. (They do nothing, however, to protect the wearer from the mind-blasting appearances of such horrors.) In this, the Starstones function something like a natural—and slightly less potent—version of the Elder Sign, the shape of which they resemble.

Starstones are often worn around the neck on a chain (and many have holes already drilled for this purpose), though they may also be carried in a pocket or purse. Simply having one on one's person is often sufficient to protect the possessor from the less tangible effects of some Mythos or supernatural entities, such as ghosts or daimons. (The latter cannot possess an individual who carries a Starstone or otherwise harm him except indirectly.) It also protects against the effects of many spells (Mind Exchange, Alter Form and so on). The Starstone must actually be visible, however, to ward off the attacks of more physical creatures, such as Deep Ones or Mi-Go—and especially Cthonians.

The substance from which Starstones are fashioned is an unclassified mineral native, so far as anyone knows, to only one region—Mnar in Earth's Dreamlands. Somehow, in the dim, distant past, several deposits of this substance were in some manner transported to earth, either via magical means or great physical effort. Oddly (or perhaps not), these rare deposits seem only to be located near areas of great Mythos activity or significance—G'harne in Africa; Irem, City of Pillars, in Arabia; Ponape, in the South Seas; Tibet's Plateau of Tsang;

and so on. While the basic mineral itself seems to have little noticeable effect on Mythos creatures, when fashioned into the five-pointed star shape, this Mnaran mineral is highly potent against such beings and is thus highly prized for its unique properties.

Rare as the deposits in our world of the Mnaran mineral may be, finding an already fashioned Starstone is an even rarer event. Those that do exist are thought to have been fashioned by powerful sorcerers eons ago, in Atlantis, Hyperborea, Mu, or Valusia. Examples of these artifacts lie in various places throughout the world—in museums, curio and antique shops, private collections, and so on—generally unknown for what they actually represent. Those that have been identified are usually found in the possession of sorcerers, cult priests, and in a few cases, fortunate occult investigators. Quite a few replicas of the original Starstones exist, too, in curio shops, private possession, and other places; these are made up of terrestrial substances and designed as “good luck” charms, in imitation of the true Starstones. None of these replicas, however, have any real power. Thus merely locating a star-shaped stone for which special powers are claimed does not guarantee that an Investigator has found a true Starstone of Mnar. (The exception seems to be when part of an actual Starstone is incorporated into such a replica; the extent of such a hybrid’s effectiveness is up to the Keeper, although it shouldn’t be nearly as great as an actual Starstone nor as ineffective as a fake one.)

To discern a real Starstone from a powerless replica, an Investigator must successfully roll both his Geology *and* his Cthulhu Mythos skills (a separate roll for each—unless the Geology roll is also a success for Cthulhu Mythos skill). A successful Mythos roll alone will suggest to him that what he has appears to be a Starstone and that, if so, it will offer him some measure of protection against the Mythos. It will not, however, tell him whether it is actually of the Mnaran mineral—and thus effective—or not. Geology skill is necessary for this final identification. Without a successful Geology roll, the only way the Investigator will know for certain whether it is a true Starstone is to test it against a Mythos threat—a potentially fatal test if the stone is not the real thing (or at least a hybrid).

It is possible to fashion a working Starstone out of the Mnaran substance, should a deposit actually be located. To do so, however, the Investigator must have the proper tools for the carving and make two

successful rolls of DEX x 3% (or a single roll of any Craft skill the Keeper determines would apply) so as not to botch the job. (He’d probably best be advised to take it to a jeweler for the actual carving.) Once the shape is correct, the Starstone must then be powered up by sacrificing one permanent point of POW and a number of magic points equal to five times the POW of the Investigator who is powering the stone. This must be done at night, under direct starlight. The magic point cost may be spread across several nights, but all must come from the same individual, as must the POW; MPs stored in a battery may be used as well, as long as they come from the same person. (The earth-bound stone must be so powered because the transition from the Dreamlands and its long sojourn on our less-magical world have drained much of the inherent power from the mineral.) Once powered in this manner, the Starstone will retain its effectiveness for millennia. A Starstone fashioned from existing deposits of the mineral in Mnar itself requires no such infusion of POW and magic points to empower it to full effectiveness—physically transporting one from the Dreamlands, however, would prove no easy task.

Should any investigator actually come into possession of a true Starstone of Mnar, the Keeper should determine how effective it actually will be, based on such factors as its age, its point of origin, the actual amount of magic points used to empower it, and how long into the mineral’s “life” it was before being formed into a Starstone. At the very least, however, the stone should provide the benefit of significant negative modifiers to the attack percentages of any Mythos creature who assaults the possessor of the Starstone. Fully effective Starstones should afford the character complete protection from all but the most powerful creatures (such as shoggoths) and major gods of the Mythos (Cthulhu, Azathoth, Yog-Sothoth, and others)—and may even slow these down enough to give the Investigator some hope of survival, slim as it may be. Starstones may prove to have other properties, as the Keeper desires: Certain passages in Feery’s *Notes on the Necronomicon* suggest that some Starstones may actually allow the possessor limited *control* over lesser Mythos creatures, similar to the Bind spell. (Keepers should not, however, make things *too* easy....)

SPECIAL

SUMMON GODZILLA: So what do you do when you’re facing dread Cthulhu, Hastur, Shub-



Niggurath, or another big, nasty Great Old One, and death appears imminent? Why, you just summon something that's even bigger and nastier, of course. This spell enables you to instantly conjure up Godzilla, King of the Monsters, and (you hope) sic him on whatever Mythos menace you currently face. But do beware—causing the Big G to suddenly materialize in your general vicinity not only is costly (in terms of MPs and POW), but is pretty dangerous as well. Who knows whether he'll be in his “defend the Earth” mode or his “lay waste to everything in sight” mode. If the latter, there's no guarantee he won't stomp on you—or convert you into a crispy critter along with any Mythos deities in his current line of sight. (Oh, did we mention, by the way, that there's no corresponding **Bind Godzilla** spell . . .?) Of course, if you're about to disappear down the tentacle-studded maw of the Big C, a quick death at the hands (or feet or nuclear breath) of Godzilla may actually seem quite a God(zilla) send after all.

The cost to summon Godzilla to combat your Mythos problem? A whopping 1,000 MPs and the sacrifice of all the summoner's POW (or that of someone else agreed upon by the summoner *and* everyone else present). Of course, the one who sacrifices all his or her POW isn't going to be around to see this “Battle of the Behemoths.” (Cthulhu vs. Godzilla . . . hmmm. Might play well at the drive-in . . .) But considering the possible alternatives . . . After the magic points and POW are spent, the summoner (if still among the living) must roll POW x 5% (based on original POW, of course) to determine whether the spell succeeds. (If he has sacrificed all his POW, and his life, someone else present, designated by the late summoner, can make the POW x 5% roll.) Godzilla can be summoned from almost anywhere, but if the summoner is in Japan, he may add +10% to the chance Godzilla will show up, and if he's in the mid-Pacific, he may add +15%. (If he's on Monster Island at the time, no need to roll—Godzilla comes automatically.)

If successfully summoned, Godzilla appears in the nearest body of water capable of holding him (horizontally, but not necessarily vertically—we are, after all, talking about a *movie* monster here!). That can be the ocean (obviously), a wide river, a large

lake—even an oversized retaining pond, if it's wide enough. (So maybe he gates in from the bottom of the pond, so until he climbs out, you see only the top half, while his lower torso and legs are still in Japan or on Monster Island or wherever—see preceding comment about him being a movie monster.)

Seeing Godzilla for the first time costs 0/1D6 SAN if you're expecting him and 1D4/1D20 if you're not. (Those who lose enough SAN to go indefinitely insane usually end up with a new phobia—Kaijuphobia.) Hearing his distinctive **ARRRONNNNKKKK!** roar for the first time costs another 0/1D3 SAN. Seeing Godzilla's fabled nuclear flame breath up close and personal also costs 0/1D3 the first time—and may result in 1D6 to 1D100 points of damage, depending on how close you are to the burst. (The latter value if you are actually the target.)

No CoC stats are given for Godzilla, because none are really necessary—nothing smaller than maybe a Dhole has even a chance against Toho's finest (and that's *only* if the Big G's having an off day). Keepers who require stats anyway and who have Steve Jackson Games' *GURPS Warehouse 23* and *GURPS Cthulhupunk* can take the stats for Gojira in the former and use the *GURPS/CoC* conversion guidelines in the latter. If you don't have access to those books, just assume that Godzilla has 170 HPs, 50 points armor, and he regenerates 1D10+10 HPs/round; does 20D10+10 damage with his nuclear breath (65% chance to hit), 1D6+25D6 damage with his fists/claws (70% chance to hit), and probably 25D6 or so with bite, tail, and stomp attacks (from 60-70% chance to hit); and you can calculate his stats from that.

(Oh, and in case you haven't figured it out yet, this one isn't for real . . . unless, of course, you *want* it to be . . .)



“Oh, no—
there goes
Tokyo!”

NEW (OR VARIANT) MYTHOS BOOKS

*A Murder of Terrible Tomes, Gruesome Grimoires, and Horrible Histories
To increase your Investigators' knowledge of the Mythos—and reduce their SAN*

These new volumes can be used by the Keeper as optional additions to the lists of Mythos books in the *CoC* rulebook and elsewhere (the *Keeper Companion*, and so on.). He may feel free, of course, to alter the descriptions of these tomes as he sees fit to best suit his own campaign.

THE NECRONOMICON: *As translated by Henrietta Montague*, this was a strictly limited, scholarly study of the dreaded tome that is the “bible” of the Cthulhu Mythos. Miss Montague undertook the task of translating Abdul Alhazred’s mystic writings at the behest of the British Museum. She based her English translation on Wormius’ Latin edition, following the copy owned by the Museum. Her manuscript, however, is a carefully expurgated translation, lacking even some of the questionable passages found in *Dee*. Even the spells are mostly expurgated, except for those Miss Montague considered “benign” or even “benevolent.” Copies of her translation can be found in the British Museum, the Oxford and Cambridge libraries—as well as those of several other British universities—and the collections of a few private scholars. The only copy known to exist in the United States is that in the Miskatonic University Library’s Forbidden Books section. Miss Montague, unfortunately, died of a mysterious wasting disease soon after completing her translation of Alhazred’s blasphemous visions. *Sanity loss: 1D3/2D8; Cthulhu Mythos +11%; average time to study and comprehend: 42 weeks.* Spells: Dust of Suleiman, Elder Sign, The Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Resurrection, Voorish Sign.

FEERY’S COMPLETE NOTES ON THE NECRONOMICON: This book is by far the most accessible version of the forbidden tome available, but is also one of the rarest. Many are familiar with the two pamphlet versions of Feery’s work, but fewer are aware that these are drastically abridged versions of his book-length manuscript. Feery intended his *Original Notes* to be merely a preview of the complete volume, but because of the occultist’s untimely death, the book was never published. The

manuscript was found, however, by a pupil of Feery’s, who managed to have a dozen or so copies privately printed. (He made several manuscript copies of the original as well, although only one is known still to exist, currently kept at Miskatonic University. Others may have found their way into the libraries of private collectors—or even of various cults.)

Not strictly a translation, Feery’s *Complete Notes* is more a “reconstruction” of the horrid ramblings of the mad Arab. Often fanciful, *Complete Notes on the Necronomicon* differs in many passages from the texts of Alhazred’s book that are contained in both the British Museum and the Miskatonic U. library. Joachim Ferry, the author/translator, was a British occultist of some note, who died under mysterious circumstances, though his body was never actually found—only blood and splashes of gore coating his study. Feery was known, however, to have had an encyclopedic knowledge of the occult in general and the Mythos in particular.

While it is believed that he used the Latin text of the *Necronomicon* as the basis for his *Notes*, certain passages reflect data gleaned from other Mythos works, such as *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* and even—it is believed by some Mythos scholars—the original *Al Azif*, as well as what had to have come from Feery’s own personal experiences. Because of this, Feery’s work is more useful in gaining knowledge of the Mythos and learning spells than is Montague’s translation, though it is not quite as mind-blasting thanks to Feery’s reworkings of certain portions of the text. Only 9% of the +Cthulhu Mythos skill for Ferry’s *Notes* counts as previous knowledge of the *Necronomicon* when reading more potent “editions” of the dreaded tome. *Sanity loss: 1D2/2D6; Cthulhu Mythos +13%; average time to study and comprehend: 28 weeks.* Spells: As per *Al-Azif*, plus Alter Form, Call/Dismiss Ghatanotha, Call/Dismiss Ithaqua, Contact Cthonian, Contact Deity/Cthulhu, Contact Deity/Chaugnar Faugn, Contact Dagon, Contact Deep One, Contact Elder

Thing, Contact Star-Spawn of Cthulhu, Contact Mi-Go, Create Gate, Create Barrier of Naach-Tith, Deflect Harm, Dream Vision, Eibon's Wheel of Mist, Eye of Light and Darkness, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Flesh Ward, Grasp of Cthulhu, Heart's Courage, Plutonian Drug, Prinn's Crux Ansata, Red Sign of Shudde M'ell, Voice of Ra, Wave of Oblivion.

GESICHT DES BÖSES is the original German work penned by the infamous Baron Adolf Knigge, codenamed "Philo," second in influence only to the notorious Adam Weishaupt in the Ancient Order of Illuminated Seers of Bavaria, more commonly known as the Bavarian Illuminati. In *Gesicht*, written following his departure from the order, Knigge revealed in terrible detail the true, inner secrets not only of the Illuminati, but of the various branches of Masonry infiltrated by the order, such as the Grand Orient Lodges; it also dealt with occult orders stretching all the way back to such earlier secret societies as the Knights Templar and the various Rosicrucian orders. In this evil work, Knigge exploded forever the carefully constructed façade of the Illuminati as an organization devoted only to reason and enlightenment and opposed to the "superstitious nonsense" of religion. It describes in detail Weishaupt's dealings with the "Black Man" (likely an avatar of Nyarlathotep) as well as the tripart deity Jah-Bul-On, worshipped in the inner ranks of Royal Arch Masonry.

Gesicht des Böses firmly links the Illuminati, its predecessors, and its successors with the hideous worship of the dark gods of the Mythos—primarily in the person of Jah-Bul-On, the "god" of the inner orders of Masonry, thought by some scholars to be simply another of the many avatars of Nyarlathotep (and by others to be an entirely separate Great Old One). Knigge's original work in German is very scarce today, having had only a small printing in Ingolstadt, Bavaria, before the outlawing of the Illuminati in 1783. (It is hinted that the revelations contained in *Gesicht* was what actually led to the original suppression of the order rather than those reasons normally propounded by students of the history of secret societies.) Most copies were destroyed, but a few were smuggled out of Bavaria by initiates of the society, who embraced the work despite it being written as an exposé of the order. *Sanity loss: 1D3/2D8; Cthulhu Mythos +14%; Occult + 12%; average time to study and comprehend: 32 weeks. Spells: Black Binding, Call/Dismiss Cthugha, Cause Disease, Chant of Thoth, Clutch of Nyogtha,*

Compel Flesh, Contact the Black Man (Contact Deity/Nyarlathep), Contact Deity/Jah-Bul-On, Contact Ghoul, Create Time Gate, Dominate, Enchant Costume, Extend, Food of Life, Glamour, Implant Fear, Look to the Future, Mesmerize, Mindblast, Mind Transfer, Nightmare, Resurrection, Sekhmenkenhep's Words, Send Dreams, Shrivelling, Steal Life, Voorish Sign, Word of Power.

Only one English translation of *Gesicht des Böses* is known to exist for certain: the privately printed version entitled *The Countenance of Evil*, translated at the turn of this century by a Dr. Douglas Femmel. Femmel taught linguistics at a small Midwestern U.S. university before a tragic accident crippled the professor for life. It is believed that he was working on his translation at the time of his accident. A number of copies can be found today in the private collections of occultists and conspiracy theorists, as well as printed versions in the British Museum, the Miskatonic U. library, and a few other locations. *Sanity loss: 1D2/1D10; Cthulhu Mythos +10%; Occult + 11%; average time to study and comprehend: 25 weeks. Spells: As Gesicht des Böses, but lacking Cause Disease, Extend, Food of Life, and Look to the Future.*

No other translations of this foul book are known, though rumors persist of an English edition published in London in the mid-1800s. If this edition truly existed, no copies have yet come to light. (But if it does, its garbled translation, requiring only 2 weeks to study and comprehend, gives only +6% to *Cthulhu Mythos* and +10% to *Occult* skills and costs only 1/2D4 SAN—although specific copies may have other spells and information copied in the margins, on the flyleaf, etc., which could raise the +%s and SAN loss, as well as add other spells. This edition has only the spells Contact Ghoul, Glamour, Mindblast, and Shrivelling.)

THE REVELATIONS OF GLAAKI (ONE-VOLUME, ABRIDGED): This tome is a massive, one-volume, abridged version of the multi-volume original. The unknown compiler, however, made certain that all the spells of the original appear in this version, along with as much of the SAN-blasting knowledge that he could fit in. It appears from internal information to have been printed up in London sometime during the last quarter of the 19th century, perhaps as a more accessible, more readable version of the original *Revelations*. Because the text has been condensed, this volume doesn't contain all

the text necessary to automatically open the reader up to possession by Y'golonac; the chance that the Great Old One can oppress the reader is only the character's POW x 3%. The Keeper should roll for any Investigator reading the Revelations and, if the roll is a success (a failure for the character), Y'golonac will first begin to haunt the reader's dreams, becoming more and more real to him, until at last it can possess him. (The Keeper should determine whether the character is inevitably doomed to become Y'golonac's next vessel or if he can be saved by some means.) *Sanity loss: 1D6/2D6; Cthulhu Mythos +12%; average time to study and comprehend: 28 weeks.* Spells: As nine-volume edition.

THE GOMORRAH TABLETS: These were a set of disturbing clay tablets inscribed in ancient Aramaic that were discovered in Palestine at the site traditionally held to be that of the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, south of the Dead Sea. They were originally uncovered by a British archaeological team led by Dr. Joseph Montgomery Lyre, in the late 19th century. Lyre, a Professor of Ancient History and Biblical Antiquities at Christ Church, Oxford, devoted the remainder of his life to the translation of the tablets. They were said to be a record of the depravities committed by the inhabitants of the twin cities, which led ultimately to their destruction by the wrath of God and the transformation of what was once a "land of milk and honey" into a bleak desert. Dr. Lyre's controversial translation, however, told of perversities beyond those thought possible by the mind of man, as well as records of black rites and sorceries practiced by the Gomorrans and their fellows.

The abominations so starkly described in Lyre's translation led to his being sent down (dismissed) from the university and to his retirement under a cloud of disgrace. Lyre was found soon afterward hanging from a rafter in his study, a look of terror on his face. His notes were subsequently burned by his widow, and existing copies of his translation were destroyed by order of the dean of the university. A graduate student working under Lyre, however, managed to smuggle out an incomplete translation of his work; he later managed to get it printed in a limited edition by the infamous Golden Goblin press. The whereabouts of the original tablets are to this day unknown, having disappeared from Lyre's possession at the time of his death. Rumor has it that the *Gomorrah Tablets* themselves—or at least a complete copy of Lyre's translation—wound up in the library

of Aleister Crowley, the infamous "Great Beast" himself. If so, Crowley never admitted it. (If anyone should somehow run across the original and can read Aramaic, double the SAN loss listed below; add +3% to *Cthulhu Mythos skill* and +5% to *Occult*; and multiply the time necessary to read and comprehend x 5. Other spells may be added as the Keeper wishes.)

The Golden Goblin edition of the *Tablets* contains a description of the spell Call Azathoth (designated therein Summon the Wrath of God). Ominously—and most suggestively—there is no component Dismiss Azathoth spell to be found anywhere in the work. If this was absent in the original as well, could the truth about the destruction of Sodom and Gemorrah at last have been revealed? *Sanity loss: 1/1D8; Cthulhu Mythos: +6%; Occult +8%; average time to study and comprehend: 13 weeks.* *Spells:* Alter Weather, Blight/Bless Crop, Bring Haboob, Call Azathoth, Cast Out Devil, Charm Animal, Contact Sand Dweller, Parting Sands, Word of Power.

VAMPYRES IN TRANSYLVANIAN FOLK-LORE, by Dr. Abraham Van Helsing. This English translation of the original book (in Dutch) by the famed Victorian vampire hunter provides a vast range of rare information about vampires—and especially how they relate to the Cthulhu Mythos. It includes information on how to kill a vampire, on how to save the victim of a vampiric attack, and on the tools of the vampire slayer's trade (holy water, crucifix, wooden stake, etc.). *Sanity loss: 0/1D2; Cthulhu Mythos +2%; Occult +10%; average time to read and comprehend: 3 weeks.* *Spells:* None.

VOODOO HEXES AND KURSES: This Mythos book, is primarily a grimoire, handwritten by a long-dead voodoo priestess in New Orleans. The writing is crabbed and difficult to read; it is written in a mixture of English, French, and a Cajun/Creole patois. To successfully skim or read the book, Investigators must roll half their skills in both English and French to piece it together. (Someone who knows both languages plus Cajun/Creole may roll at full percentages.) If only one of the Language rolls is successful, the Investigator gains only half the available benefits from reading the book (but takes only half the SAN loss). The book is rambling and mixes voodoo rituals with spells and horrid descriptions of what the old woman had done to her enemies. A few copies of the original were made by favored disciples and may be found as well.

(Optional: The Occult skill gain is limited to information about voodoo.) *Sanity loss 1D3/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +2 percentiles; Occult +10 percentiles; average 11 weeks to study and comprehend*. Spells:* Komand Fyry Swurm (Command Fire Swarm), Dust fur them Not uv thiz Urth (Baneful Dust of Hermes Trismegistus), Kurse uv the Ratt (Curse of the Rat-Thing), Kall Baron Samadhi (ContactDeity/Nyarlahotep), and another 1D5 voodoo spells (Keeper's choice—choose among Contact Deity/Loa, Enchant Candle, Enchant Doll, Enchant Gris-Gris, Enchant Ju-Ju, Enchant Wanga, Sending of the Dead, Soul Extraction, and Summon/Bind Baka).

**At the Keeper's option, the book may be broken down into sections so that it takes only a day or two per section to study and comprehend and to learn spells. Each section will give a Sanity Loss of 1, to a maximum of 6 total, and Occult +1D3 percentiles to the maximum of 10. Each section contains 1-2 spells. No Cthulhu Mythos skill will be gained until the entire book is read.*

CTHULHU AMONG THE VICTORIANS, by Professor Laban Shrewsbury, Miskatonic University Press, Arkham, Massachusetts, 1929. Professor Shrewsbury's masterful treatise on the inroads made by the Great Old Ones and their minions during the age of Victoria. This book was another of those written by Professor Shrewsbury before his strange, untimely disappearance. It was available only in manuscript form for several years at the Miskatonic U. Library before its actual publication. It is notable as the first comprehensive study of Mythos activity during that period of the 19th century. *Sanity loss 0/1D4; Cthulhu Mythos +7%; average 1D6 days to read and comprehend. Spells:* None.

Excerpt: *"The Victorian Age was a bright time for the British Empire, which reached its zenith during the 1890s. But for all the light shed by the coming of the new-fangled electric illumination that slowly replaced the gaslights of the earlier Victorian years, there was still darkness afoot—especially in the obscurest corners of London, hub of the Empire. Here, in the dark pools of shadow lurking just beyond the gaslight, evil hid and grew and made its nefarious plans.*

"In this London stalked, in both fact and fiction, such creatures as Jack the Ripper, Count Dracula, Sweeney Todd, Spring-heeled Jack, and Mr. Hyde, and magical societies such as the Golden Dawn practiced hermetic rituals. Who can know for certain

what other, more horrible entities shared the dim recesses of the great city with them. How naïve to assume that the dread minions and dark worshipers of Great Cthulhu, Y'gononac, Nyarlahotep, and other cosmic blasphemies had not carved out accursed niches in the narrow alleyways, murky mews, mold-encrusted sewers and basements, and hidden back rooms of 1890s London!

"And such was the case. During those years, many of the horrors now plaguing the world first gained tenuous sway in our reality, to fester and multiply into the fullness of foul and unnatural life—and to gradually rot from within the once-noble empire of Britain. Had mankind only been more vigilant during those fateful years . . ."

THE RIPPER DIARY: This anonymous diary purports to be that of the real Jack the Ripper (not to be confused with the Maybrick forgery that enjoyed a vogue during the early 1990s). It was apparently found around the turn of the century by a workman tearing down a flame-gutted mansion in Barnet, just north of London. Not being one for reading, the workman used it as a doorstop, where it remained for the next 20 years. When he died, the diary ended up in a small used-book shop in the West End, where it was found by an antiquarian book collector and purchased as a curio. As the writing was often difficult to decipher, the book was stored away, where it was passed down through the original owner's family until it came into the possession of a family member who was also a Ripperologist. He was rummaging through his collection one day when he ran across the little book and started idly to read it. Despite the difficult handwriting, he managed to get far enough to realize that he was reading the actual diary of Jack the Ripper! He was electrified by the realization.

But as he read on, he became more and more disturbed, as it became apparent that the Ripper was no mere madman, but a wretched soul turned into an inhuman monster—some sort of "energy" or "psychic" vampire that lived on the life forces of others, killing them in the process. As he read the Ripper's account, he became more and more distressed by its grisly revelations. Whereas at first he'd planned to reveal his discovery to the world, he began to have severe reservations at such a course. The ramblings of the creature that had ravaged Whitechapel in the 1880s—and 1890s, for the diary revealed that the Ripper had returned to London to kill again after his initial spree—so unnerved him

that he finally decided that no one else should know the true secret of Jack the Ripper. And besides, the writer of the diary was never identified by name in its pages, only by the initials J.D. True, the diary linked him to several places in the greater London area—he lived in the hamlet of Barnet, was a Mason and a regular diner at Simpson’s-in-the-Strand, owned a yacht christened the *Matilda Briggs*—and provided other clues to the Ripper’s identity (such as that he had holdings in the Netherlands-Sumatra Company in the East Indies and in a mine in Sauchie, Scotland). A clever researcher could no doubt use these clues to track down the Ripper’s real name.

But that would have to wait for a future time. The world was certainly not yet prepared to learn of the dreadful, preternatural condition of the Whitechapel killer—nor of the even more horrid creatures he trafficked with. The book was locked away and—thankfully—forgotten. It was donated to the British Museum, along with the rest of its discoverer’s collection after the man died in a fit of madness a few short years later, screaming again and again: “The lurkers—the lurkers below!” It would have remained there most likely had it not been discovered during a research trip to the Reading Room by the Great Beast himself, occultist Aleister Crowley. Crowley had long suspected a supernatural cause behind the Ripper murders, and here at last was his proof. He painstakingly copied the entire contents of the diary over several sessions, later having it privately printed (by the infamous Golden Goblin Press, no less).

Ironically, having a small press run and thus limited circulation, the diary made no ripples in Ripperologist circles—in fact, it was either totally ignored or declared a hoax carried out by Crowley by all except those in the occult community. So few have read it, and even fewer know of its existence, despite its horrific revelations about Jack the Ripper and his connection to the Mythos.

The diary itself is an account by the Ripper (or “J.D.” as he refers to himself) of his entire ordeal and evolution into the evil creature he became. It begins in 1888 with a description of what the dread Tcho-Tchos tribe of Sumatra did to him—torture being the least of his trials—and ends in 1893, with an entry about his last kill (or at least the final one recorded). It describes not only his killings, most with the aid of what he calls a “South Seas Daemon” (a Dimensional Shambler) as well as a giant rat native to Sumatra, but of his dealings with a certain Whitechapel madam named “Macabre” or “McCabre” or something very

similar. (The handwriting wasn’t clear, so Crowley merely copied down whatever he thought it looked like at the time.) The woman—seemingly even more depraved than the Ripper, if that were possible—appeared to be a vessel for another type of demonic monstrosity, something the writer describes as “a headless bloat of flesh, mouths writhing obscenely within the palms of its hands.”

It talks, too, of the “Lurkers Below,” degenerate humanoid things that live beneath the streets of London and eat carrion—and, when they could get it, fresh human meat. The madam, it seemed, kept them not only well-fed but devoted to her by serving up her own girls, as well as other independent streetwalkers who refused to submit to her. And it describes the Rippers travels across the Continent, the Middle East, and Asia from 1888 to 1893, detailing the many acts of violence he committed to further extend his own craven existence. Even Crowley was rumored to have been as disgusted as he was fascinated by it. The original diary remains in the Forbidden Books section of the Reading Room, where it was placed after Crowley was observed copying it down. (For more details on psychic vampires, see page 89.)

Sanity loss: 1/1D8; Cthulhu Mythos +5; Occult +8; average 2D6+2 days to read and comprehend (should one find the original diary, it also requires an English roll to decipher the tortured, crabbed handwriting). Spells: Bind Giant Rat, Create Gate, Enchant Cane, Flesh Ward, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind South Seas Daemon (Dimensional Shambler), Psychic Drain, Sustain Life. (The diary also contains a distorted version of the spell used to transform “J.D.” into a psychic vampire, but learning that spell would cost an Investigator 1D20/1D100 SAN—and an Idea roll would suggest that to be a very bad idea. Additionally, it wouldn’t work due to a combination of the Ripper’s state of mind in writing it down, his poor handwriting, and Crowley’s misinterpretations of the original text in the Goblin edition, but would kill anyone it was performed on.)

THE TESTAMENT OF YAR-SURMAZTO, by Madame Alexandra DeMore and Yar-Surmazto, High Priest of Atlantis. This book is a supposedly channeled account of a long-dead priest of Atlantis and his personal dealings with the Great Old Ones and the Outer Gods. Madame Alexandra was a popular medium and self-claimed psychic who lived in London in the 1890s. She enjoyed a small amount



of celebrity in fin de siècle occult circles, reading fortunes, divining the future from tea leaves, and all the usual hocus-pocus. Many—including the great Sherlock Holmes—considered her a mere fraud, conning the credulous with her claims of insight into the afterlife. He dismissed her “insights” as a weak variety of his own methods of observation and deduction, on a far simpler scale, of course. (Holmes once said of her: “If *she* is a medium, I am quite well-done.”)

The medium seemed to graduate onto a grander scale, however, after she claimed to have contacted on the spiritual plane the disembodied soul of a millenias-dead priest of lost Atlantis, one Yar-Surmazto. Madame Alexandra began channeling messages from the priest to her admirers, creating even more controversy among the occultists of her time. She was examined by members of the Society for Psychical Research, who could find no evidence of deception in her channelings, regardless of some of the outlandish statements made by the Atlantean priest about the supernatural forces he commanded in the days of the lost continent. (Sherlock Holmes, his opinion of the medium already quite well known, was not asked to participate in any of the tests the Society conducted.) Even Harry Houdini, who investigated Madame Alexandra shortly before the medium’s tragic death, couldn’t discern any trickery in her methods.

Madame Alexandra soon fell out of favor with the occult community, however, after she privately published a book of messages from Yar-Surmazto (whom she listed as coauthor). The descriptions of Atlantis and of its gods and technologies seemed too far-fetched even for those used to such outlandish claims. Some dismissed it as plagiarism derived from the works of more reputable occultists, such as Madame Blavatsky and Ignatius Donnelly. Most disparaged was “Yar-Surmazto’s” description of the last days of Atlantis and how it had been ravaged by slime-coated creatures who appeared from nowhere when a tailed star appeared in the skies—not to mention his boast that he had saved the continent . . . by calling on the Old Gods to send a great wave to wash away the infestation (sinking Atlantis in the process.)

Disgraced, no longer able to make a living as a medium, and constantly being harangued by the disembodied voice of Yar-Surmazto, Madame Alexandra DeMore finally took her own life, drowning herself one night in the Thames. The book

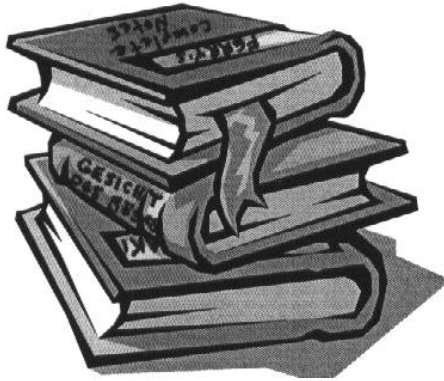
was forgotten until, decades later, another occultist by the name of Evo Simpson declared that he, too, was in contact with Yar-Surmazto. As was typical, the Golden Goblin Press published a quick, cheap edition of the book, before it, too, languished on the bookshelves of aficionados of the supernatural. *Sanity loss: 0/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +3; Occult +5; average 1D4+1 days to read and comprehend.* *Spells:* Alter Weather, Breath of the Deep, Contact Deep One, Create Mist of Releh, Create Scrying Window, Wave of Oblivion.

KILLER COMETS, WINGED LOBSTER MEN, AND OTHER THREATS FROM SPACE, by Kyle T. Oates. This short, privately printed (originally mimeographed and stapled) book chronicles the observations of the eccentric scientist and inventor through his homemade telescope. It describes his studies of a race of winged creatures apparently able to traverse the aether from one world to another. Unfortunately, Oates (a devotee of the most lurid pulps of the day) unwisely refers to these creatures as “Winged Lobster Men from Space.” That alone was sufficient to get him labeled a crackpot by anyone in the scientific community who would even deign to acknowledge his existence. Oates described how these creatures appeared to be mining some kind of ore from a new comet that had appeared in the skies (formally named Comet Negretto) and speculated that they originated on a world near the rim of our solar system—possibly one as yet hidden to our telescopes. (He further hurt his case by including a “spell” he claimed would summon these beings.)

Oates goes on in the book to postulate that the end of the world would soon be upon us, the result of Earth having been irradiated by an unknown element when passing through the tail of the comet. He further damages his reputation as even a marginal scientist by describing “creatures” that “emerged” from a group of moon rocks that had been on display in the local natural history museum—and how he, of course, became the hero of a group of investigators by stopping the creatures with his “death ray projector,” built upon the science of his “good friend,” Nikola Tesla. Oates’ distributed free copies of the pulp-like book to the newspapers and to his “fellow” scientists, most of whom swiftly deposited them in their “oval file,” under “crackpot.” A few papers used it as joke filler on slow news days.

Oates book would today probably be found only in the stacks of pulps and scientific journals at his

own lab/home if not for a copy finding its way into the hands of the publishers of—you guessed it—Golden Goblin Press, who printed up a short run. Oates would later enjoy 15 minutes of fame within the fledgling science fiction community after one of his beloved pulps purchased serialization rights to what they thought was an amusing, if outlandish, piece of fiction. *Sanity loss: 0/1D3; Cthulhu Mythos +1; average 1D2 days to read and comprehend.* *Spell: Contact Winged Lobster Men (Mi-Go).*



ON THE READING OF SPELLS DIRECTLY FROM MYTHOS BOOKS

This variant rule enables Investigators who have successfully read a Mythos book, yet who haven't had time to fully learn a spell from it, to use the book as a source from which to read spells once they've located them. After all, when Professor Armitage used the *Necronomicon* to dismiss Yog-Sothoth in the "The Dunwich Horror," he didn't take several weeks to learn the spell by rote, but rather used the text directly from the tome itself to defeat the Outer God. Keepers who wish to allow such short cuts in their own campaigns may use the following guidelines to administer such situations when reading spells may prove feasible.

Once an investigator has successfully read a Mythos book, he may attempt to locate spells in it for future reference—having read the entire book, he's assumed to have read through its spells (whether he actually recognized them as such or not). To actually pinpoint which passages of a book he's read contain spells, however, the Investigator must roll his INT x 5%. Because he's already read it, instead of taking the weeks or months necessary to learn the spell, it takes him only 1D6 hours to locate it within the book. (If he rolls one-fifth the necessary percentage, he finds it in 1D6 minutes!) The Investigator may continue to locate spells in this manner as long as he has the time

and the inclination to do so—until the Keeper decrees no more are spells to be found in that particular Mythos work (or all the standard ones for a "common" Mythos book are found). Once he has located a particular spell, to find it again in the same book (or an exact copy—not a different translation or edition), the Investigator need only roll 5 x the book's +Cthulhu Mythos%, just as if it were any other piece of information he was seeking out within the pages of the book. (See page 90 of the *CoC* rulebook, edition 5.6.1.) If the Investigator has thought to mark the place where the spell was located (with a bookmark, etc.), his chances to locate the spell are doubled (or automatic, if the book contains only one spell).

Each attempt to locate a previously discovered spell in a book will take a minimum of 1 round. To determine the exact number of rounds it takes for each different book, divide the book's +Cthulhu Mythos percentage by five, rounding up. (This represents in part the size of the book—large tomes with lots of information require more time to find a spell within their pages than do thinner volumes.) If the spell's place was marked, halve the time necessary to find it. Even if there is only one spell marked in the book, one round is still necessary to locate it—opening the book, turning the pages, and so on. Should an Investigator be disturbed in his attempt to find the spell before he has located it, he must start over again in his search once he can turn his attention back to the task.

If the Investigator fails in his attempt to find the spell, he may try again a second time, though the attempt takes an additional round for success (minimum of two). If the second attempt fails, a third attempt takes twice the normal time required to find the spell (minimum of three rounds). If the spell still hasn't been located by the third attempt (by which time it will probably be too late anyway), no further attempt may be made for at least 24 hours. The Investigator has become confused and is obviously passing over the spell without even noticing it; he needs time to calm down and think things through.

Once the Investigator has found the spell he seeks within the book, he may cast it simply by reading it from the pages before him. Except for those spells that normally take periods of a day or more to cast, however, it will take *twice* the normal time to cast a spell being read directly from a book—a minimum of two rounds. This is because of the necessity of

turning pages, keeping one's place in the book, and attempting any physical gestures necessary for the spell's success while holding onto a large, unwieldy tome. The Keeper may wish to increase the magic-point cost of the spell as well, if he believes the extra energy involved in finding, viewing, and reading the powerful runes from the printed page justifies this extra cost.

Example: *Adam Tenerife has successfully read the Greek edition of the Necronomicon, surviving the mind-blasting experience with his mind still intact (although he does tend to get a bit nervous at the sight of trees . . .). He spends 3 hours one evening attempting to ferret out a spell from the cryptic scrawlings of the book, rolls 5 x the book's +Cthulhu Mythos percentage of 17, and finds the spell Bind Hunting Horror. Satisfied, Tenerife closes the book to prepare for bed, but is stopped by a horrid smashing sound downstairs. Peering out the window, he spies a Hunting Horror breaking into his house. Tenerife spends a frantic four rounds attempting to relocate the Hunting Horror spell, successfully rolling 5 x 17%, the book's +Cthulhu Mythos score, to do so. He begins to read the spell as he listens to the sounds of the Horror tearing up the stairs. Two rounds later, he finishes his casting—just in time to Bind the Horror as it bursts through the door to his study! The Keeper judges that the especially harrowing experience and his frantic rush to find and cast the spell has drained Tenerife, so charges him two magic points rather than the normal one for the Binding spell. To Tenerife, it is a bargain.*

Of course, there are drawbacks to the method of reading spells rather than learning them. The most obvious is the need to cart around that old, moldering—and possibly crumbling—Mythos book wherever the Investigator goes if he expects that he

might need magical assistance. As some of these books are quite good-sized, this could prove a burden in situations where ease of movement could mean the difference between life or death. The Investigator might be faced with the unenviable choice of abandoning the book—and its valuable knowledge—or some other vital item . . . or even a companion . . . should the situation require it. And, of course, carrying around a Mythos book is the best way to lose it. It wouldn't take much to destroy one—an open flame, a dunk in the river, a dagger or bullet aimed at the Investigator . . . and should any of those mad cultists realize the Investigator is carrying a Mythos book on his person, guess who becomes their next target?

Of course, clever Investigators may think to copy the spells down into their notebooks or onto a handy piece of paper, rather than carry the book itself around. Whenever this is attempted, however, the Keeper should secretly make a roll of that Investigator's Language skill in the appropriate language. If the roll is successful, the spell is copied correctly and will work just as though the Investigator were reading it directly from the book (although the time to locate it is only as long as it takes to pull out the paper or notebook on which it is written—one or two rounds at most). If the Language roll is a failure, however, the Investigator has made an error in copying down the spell, and it will *not* work when cast. Unfortunately, the Investigator won't know this—until he tries the spell. And then it just might be far too late

Note: Feery's *Notes on the Necronomicon* and the Montague translation of the *Necronomicon* are the original creations of Britain's premier Mythos author, Brian Lumley, whose many excellent contributions to the Mythos are hereby gratefully acknowledged.



Mythos Lesson #4: If your drink smells “fishy,” don’t drink it!

NEW MYTHOS MINIONS AND MONSTERS

*Five Fearsome Nasties to Rend the Limbs from and Blast the Sanity
Of Even the Most Stout-Hearted Investigators*

Need a few more monsters, minions, and other nemeses to insert into your CoC campaign? (What—there aren't enough already?) Well, if you want to toss in something new—something not readily available in most other published CoC tomes, try some of these nasties on for size. (As long as no one uses the Enchant Costume spell while you do . . .)

Moon Creatures, Lesser Independent Race

Eons ago, a war raged in the outer solar system. The Mi-Go had discovered rich deposits of a strange, radioactive mineral, as yet unknown to our science, on the fifth planet of our system, orbiting between Mars and Jupiter. Unfortunately for the Mi-Go, the fifth planet was inhabited by a highly technological race, in some ways superior to even the Mi-Go. Although these denizens of Planet V (a world known by various names all throughout history—Tiamat, Phaeton, Rahab, Minerva, and even Krypton!) had the technology necessary to hold off the Mi-Go invasions for many decades, they were outmatched in one area: magic. The tenacious Mi-Go, through their manifold connections with various deities of the Cthulhu Mythos, could call upon powerful allies and forces far beyond the technological grasp of even the most advanced of those among the beleaguered Tiamatians/Phaetonians/Rahabans/Minervans/Kryptonians. And so, inevitably, they knew their planet would be lost to the Fungi from Yuggoth.

To ensure the survival of their race, the aliens sent out vast colony ships to the inner planets of the solar system, in search of a new home where they could escape the Mi-Go. They briefly settled Mars, but the octopoid inhabitants of the red planet, while technologically inferior, proved to be coldly efficient in using their tripod war machines, heat rays, and black smoke in driving off the Planet V invaders. (Still, the latter managed to hold onto one small colony on Mars, in Cydonia, until the coming of the system-wide disaster that all but wiped them out, as it nearly did the Martians.) No one knew what became of the colony ship that attempted to land on Venus. Contact was lost after it dipped into the second

planet's atmosphere—probably the victim of the hellish environment and sulphuric atmosphere that gripped that planet. (The Martians would learn the same lessons eons later, when they, too, attempted to colonize Venus.)

But total calamity struck as the aliens eventually landed on the moon of the beautiful blue planet that circled third from the sun. Our Earth (although it would not yet be ours for untold millennia) beckoned them. Surely, it would provide refuge from the harsh ways of the Mi-Go—especially as it showed no sign at all of the mineral from their world the Fungi had sought. As they prepared Luna as a staging area for their final descent to Terra, their world ended—literally. The Mi-Go had summoned from its seat at the center of the universe, a small, but quite deadly, segment of Azathoth, the blind idiot god, and directed it at the fifth planet. That world ended in a cataclysmic explosion, its debris forming not only the Asteroid Belt that now orbits where it once did, but tons of loose debris that shot throughout the solar system, wreaking havoc upon every world in its path. (Yuggoth, safely ensconced at the rim of our system, was the exception, escaping all but the most minor of meteor damage—as the Mi-Go had expected.) Worse, the explosion also released a concentrated burst of radiation from the rare mineral that made up most of the core of the planet—a burst that somehow, unidirectionally, headed toward earth.

As the radiation reached the Earth-Moon system, it bathed the aliens with its malignant emissions. The bizarre energy had two horrific effects on them: First it reduced the once intelligent creatures to mindless, degenerate caricatures of their former selves—they became hulking, ooze-dripping, fanged and clawed mockeries of the developed race that had built a great civilization on the now-lost fifth planet. They became bloodthirsty, carnivorous, with but one thought left, burnt onto their ruined minds: kill! Although their enemies, the Mi-Go, would have been the now-creatures' target, had any been present, in their corrupted minds, anything would

do. They'd probably have torn into one another except for the second effect of the radiation: They were dissipated and fused into the very substance of the surrounding rocks—at one with the lunar surface and trapped for all eternity.

Following on the heels of the radiation, the ruined remains of the fifth planet began to crash into both the Moon and the Earth. (It had already destroyed the colony at Cydonia, on Mars, and nearly exterminated the octopoid Martians at the same time. Those few pitiful survivors of Planet V who remained alive on Mars would become the food of the octopoids, as would their ancestors, some of whom were, ironically, brought to Earth in the Martian cylinders during the invasion at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.) As the huge meteors crashed into the Moon, forming the craters that are now visible on its surface, a number of the surrounding rocks, including those containing the creatures, were ejected by the force of the bombardment's impact. Some moved off randomly into space while others went into orbit around the Earth, the Moon, and even the Sun, following the same path as our planet. Others fell to Earth and, because of the nature of the creatures inside, survived their fiery plunge into our atmosphere. Most landed in the Atlantic Ocean and sank to the bottom of the sea bed, to lie there, under the sea, for eons to come.

Meanwhile, one especially large segment of the fifth planet's core shot toward the outer reaches of the solar system, just as the Mi-Go had hoped. They planned to mine this remnant for its unique energy—just as they'd intended for the planet before its inhabitants got in the way. But the Mi-Go had miscalculated the estimated trajectory of the core fragment. Instead of moving outward toward Yuggoth, it took another path, shooting far off the ecliptic of the solar system, into uncharted space, eventually arriving in the Oort Cloud surrounding the system. By the time the Mi-Go realized it hadn't followed their calculations, it was lost to them. But, to paraphrase the Terminator, it would be back.

In the Oort Cloud, the planetary core fragment picked up icy debris drifting off the comets in the cloud. This accretion turned the core into a comet itself, and as such it drifted through the Oort Cloud for eons. Eventually, however, it was disturbed by the gravitational influence of a large celestial body that either passed near it or that it passed. (This could have been Nemesis, the Sun's brown dwarf companion; Nibiru, the Sumerian's planet of the crossing, in its

eccentric 3,600-year orbit; or even the passage of the planet-sized Outer God Ghroth into our solar system at some point in the distant past.) As a result, the new comet was thrown into an eccentric orbit itself, heading toward the inner solar system—and Earth.

The first time the nameless comet passed by earth was in the last days of Atlantis. The Atlanteans had long ago located fragments of the moon rocks to which the aliens had been bonded. They'd turned many of them into decorative pieces, while others were simply used for rock gardens and other mundane purposes. The Atlanteans had no idea the rocks contained the essence of a mutated alien race—or that they would spell the final doom of Atlantis. When the new comet neared the earth, something quite odd—inexplicable—occurred. The radiation from the planetary core at the heart of the comet began to reconstitute and release the creatures from their captivity within the moon rocks. At first, only a few were released each night and only when the comet rose in a clear sky. But the deaths began. As the comet came even closer, more creatures were released, and more Atlanteans died.

Because of how the moon creatures had been mutated, they were no longer strictly of terrene matter. They were now able to pass through solid objects in their slow, ambling gait. And normal weapons—unless forged out of extremely dense materials, such as lead and gold—had little effect on them. They quickly regenerated what damage they did suffer, making them nearly invulnerable even to the advanced sciences of Atlantis. The only thing that seemed to affect the creatures fully was magic—particularly that of the darkest kind. And the only thing that caused them to dissipate and return to their rocks was for them to immersed totally in water—the deeper the better. (If the rocks themselves were deep underwater, the creatures became trapped again, even with the rays of the comet in the skies.)

In a desperate bid to stop the creatures, the high priest of the soon-to-be lost continent, Yar-Surmazto, used the dark magic he'd learned from the gods of the Cthulhu Mythos to create a deluge to submerge the creatures and their rocks—and, consequently, Atlantis as well. The moon creatures were dissipated and trapped again in their rocks. But with the demise of Atlantis, knowledge of the moon monsters—and, more important, how to stop them—was lost as well. With the comet returning back to the outskirts of the solar system, and the rocks now again at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, the world

was safe . . . until the next time the comet visited the vicinity of Earth. Fortunately, its orbit was long and it has returned to the inner solar system only twice since the days of Atlantis.

The first time the comet returned, the rocks were still safely submerged at the bottom of the Atlantic, with the ruins of Atlantis. (Although ancient rumors of rampaging monsters may suggest that some fragments of the rocks had been recovered by post-diluvian seafarers and the creatures inside let loose by the rays of the comet.) By the comet's second appearance, in the early 20th century, mankind had again found and dredged up the moon rocks, this time while laying the Atlantic cable during the 19th century. As the comet neared again at the end of the 1920s—this time bearing the name Comet Negretto, from its discoverer—the rocks were again exposed to its rays as they were carried through the western U.S. as part of a traveling museum exhibit on loan from the Smithsonian. The rocks—now fully recognized as having originated on the moon—were on display in San Diego as the comet reached its closest point to the Earth, and the creatures began to infest and plague that city. Furthermore, the comet came so close to our planet that the Earth passed through its tail! (To learn what may have happened, and for additional information on the moon creatures, see the M.U. Monograph *Menace from the Moon*.)

With its closest approach to Earth past, and the creatures in the rocks again quiescent, the danger appeared to be over, at least for the next few thousand years. Unfortunately, the Earth's gravity caused fragments of Comet Negretto to break loose from the main body. These pieces were captured by Earth's gravity and pulled into a closer solar orbit that now intersects our own. Our planet now passes through swarms of these rocks on an irregular basis—sometimes years apart, sometimes decades. And because these fragments still emit, albeit faintly, the rays that release the moon creatures from their prison, any moon rocks exposed to the open sky (or via a window or skylight) during their passage may exude one or more of these foul survivors of the fifth planet. Even if the fragment swarms miss the Earth at any particular time, the danger isn't completely abated. When the Earth passed through Comet Negretto's tail, particles of the substance emitting the rays dusted our world. Most are well-buried by now, but should they be unearthed—and should someone have found one of the creature-containing moon rocks, either from the floor of the Atlantic or the Pacific near San Diego—

the creatures may again become free to roam . . . and kill . . .



The Moon Creatures: A Graphic Description for the Discerning Investigator

The creatures are vaguely manlike in size and shape, large and hulking, slow-moving, of barely animal intelligence. They possess long, sharp claws (remnants of bony fingers) and are irregularly coated with an oozing, acidic slime that burns human flesh. The radiation puts them slightly out of phase with solid matter (which is how they were originally imprisoned in the rocks). They can, therefore, move slowly through walls and other stationary obstacles. During such movement, they cannot attack or be attacked, as their extraterrene matter becomes fully noncorporeal until passage is complete. They can attack and be attacked at all other times, although impaling weapons (unless enchanted, blessed, or of solid lead or gold) do only minimal damage. (Lead bullets, however, do half damage and impale only on 01%.) The creatures regenerate damage each round while the comet is in the sky. They regenerate all damage while inside the moon rocks. So even if wounded severely before returning to a rock, a creature emerges fully healed the next time the rock is exposed to the comet's rays.

If any creatures do not remesh with the rocks after the influence of the comet's rays pass, they are destroyed. Extremely dense materials—lead, solid gold—can contain them, keeping them from returning to the rocks. If a creature is totally submersed in at least six feet of water for 5 rounds, it becomes inert and remains so until removed from the water. (If not removed before the comet sets or it is otherwise cut off completely from the rays, it dissipates; the water prevents it from returning to the rocks, however, destroying it.) If a creature is in less than six feet of water, it becomes inert, but the comet's rays can still reach it, reviving it in five minutes, so it can leave the water (or, if removed from the effective range of the rays, return to the rocks on dissipating).

The moon creatures are vulnerable to magic attacks—especially those by creatures of fire or that work directly on them—and take full damage from these attacks. They are also vulnerable to attacks by most Mythos creatures—and especially fear and hate the Mi-Go, as they retain a dim memory of their bitter enemies. (Mi-Go weapons do full damage.) Prinn's Crux Ansata banishes a creature back to its rock, but it can re-emerge the next night. The Elder Sign will not work directly on the creatures; they can bypass any door or opening marked with it and pass through the nearest wall. If an Elder Sign is carved onto a moon rock and the spell activated, however, the creatures inside that rock can no longer emerge as long as the sign is there and the spell retains its power.

The creatures take full damage from nonmagical attacks that use fire or electricity. The creatures' acid slime is also highly flammable. So on a successful attack with flame (or electricity) against a creature, there's a 50% chance the slime is hit and flares up, causing 1D6 damage to the creature every round until it dies or returns to the rocks. (If the roll to hit is 10% of the Investigator's skill, the flame does double damage.) Ironically, a burning creature near a pool or other source of water may instinctively walk into it, possibly cluing in the Investigators to the monsters' vulnerability to water.

For a moon creature to die by other means, it must receive sufficient damage in a single round to kill it—and the damage must be done by a weapon consisting of an extremely dense or hard material. Thus lead bullets *can* kill the creatures, if enough hit one in a single round and do sufficient damage. This means, however, that Investigators with firearms—or one using an automatic weapon—must target a single

creature to have a chance of killing one. Even then, they need to sling a *lot* of lead. Impaling weapons of any other substance (except gold) do only minimal damage. If a creature is not killed in a single round, but has only 1 or 2 hit points left, it dissipates and returns to a rock if one is within 100 yards of it; if not, the beast moves toward the nearest rock and, when 100 yards away, reemerges with it. It then regenerates all damage.

Moon Creatures, Mutated Explorers from the Fifth Planet

Char.	Dice Roll	Average
STR	3D6+12	21-23
CON	4D6+12	24-25
SIZ	3D6+5	15-16
INT	1D3+2	4
POW	3D6+4	14-15
DEX	3D6-1	10
Hit Points	CON+SIZ/2	19-22
Move	3/1 through walls, etc., as immaterial	

Damage Bonus: + 1D6

Weapons: Claws 30%, 1D8+4 +db, impales + 50% chance acid slime hit; Swipe 40%, 1D6 + db + 50% chance acid slime hit; Bite 20%, 1D3 + db + 10% chance acid slime in open wound; Grapple 30%, Special + 50% chance acid slime/round

Armor: None, but nonlead impaling weapons do minimal damage due to creature's extraterrene makeup; lead bullets do half-damage, and impale results are ignored except a roll of 01 or 02; other physical weapons do only half damage. Regenerates 2 HP/round as long as the unique rays of the mineral from their home planet can reach the creature; regenerates all HPs on reintegrating with moon rocks. (**Option:** The Keeper may, if he wishes, add an additional +1D6 to the creatures' HPs for every night that an object emitting the mineral's radiation draws closer to Earth and/or to the creatures; this would represent the radiation's effect on the creatures' extraterrene nature.)

Skills: None (all long forgotten)

Spells: None

SAN: 1/1D8

Acid Slime: Burns for 1D3 rounds, causing 1 point damage each round it is in contact with flesh; then it

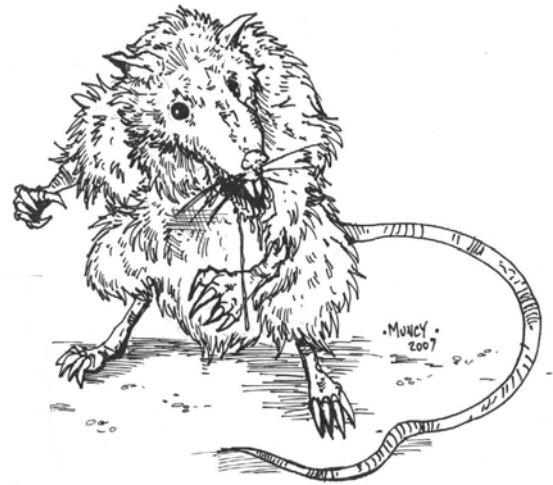
seeps into the bloodstream if a wound is from a claw hit and acts as a POT 8 poison until neutralized or the victim is dead. If the wound is a bite, the slime goes directly into the bloodstream. As a poison, the slime causes 1D3 damage each round a POT roll vs. CON is missed, until it is neutralized (by a Medical, First Aid, or Pharmacy roll) or the victim is dead. The acid is harmless to inanimate materials, although if left on clothing for several hours, it eventually burns through to the flesh underneath. The acid automatically burns an Investigator each round he is held in a grapple by a creature after the first time the grapple roll is made. A 50% chance of contacting the acid slime occurs on any hand-to-hand attack against a creature (only 25% if using Martial Arts skill).

Giant Rat of Sumatra, Servitor Creature

In the forests of the island of Sumatra, an area in which dwells a particularly nasty tribe of the dreaded Tcho-Tcho people, a number of aberrations of nature have evolved. (And the Tcho-Tchos most likely had a hand in their advent.) Most dreaded among these is the foul Giant Rat of Sumatra. This fell creature, which grows to about the size of a horse, was bred specifically by the Tcho-Tchos from ordinary rodent stock crossed with the DNA of a degenerate Ghast species, which the Tcho-Tchos obtained through trade with the serpentine *Nagas* of India. The Tcho-Tchos use the huge scavengers as ferocious guard beasts around their Sumatran village and train them to attack both their enemies and the Tcho-Tchos' natural prey (often the same thing). The giant rat is trained to attack a foe viciously and to worry it and then strip the flesh from its body until it's dead (if it's not already). The creature's fierce, beady eyes, razor-sharp teeth, and ripping claws give it a frightful appearance.

Fortunately, the Giant Rat is mostly unknown outside its Sumatran confines—although records exist of at least one such rat loosed in London in the early 1890s, connected somehow with the yacht *Matilda Briggs*. It is mentioned in the notes of one John H. Watson, M.D., companion and biographer for the great consulting detective Sherlock Holmes. (It's possible that more than one appeared in the capital of the British Empire, for Holmes was absent from London for most of the early 1890s.) Dr. Watson described the tale of this beast as one for which the world is not yet prepared. Knowing the giant rat's nasty temperament and how it disposes of its prey,

one can but concur with the good doctor's assessment. (For more information on the Giant Rat, see the M.U. Monograph *Return of the Ripper*.)



Giant Rat of Sumatra (*Rattus Sumatrii*), Fell Beast for Which the World Is Not Yet Prepared

Char.	Dice Roll	Average
STR	3D6+10	21-22
CON	3D6+6	16-17
SIZ	4D6+10	24
POW	2D6+3	10
DEX	3D6+2	13
Hit Points	CON+SIZ/2	20-21
Move	10	

Damage Bonus: +1-2D6

Weapons: Bite* 50%, 1D8+db+worry; Claw** 25%, 1D6+db; Crush***, Special; 2D6+db

Skills: Sneak 50%, Hide 55%, Track (by smell) 35%, Swim 65%.

Armor: 3-point fur, gristle, and fat.

SAN: 0/1D3 SAN. Seeing the rat ferociously attack its prey: 0/1D2 SAN. (This SAN loss can occur every time one views the vicious rat's attacks.)

Notes: *If the rat scores a successful bite, it will worry its prey similar to the way a Ghoul does, as it was taught by its masters. **The rat can attack with one claw or a bite per round, but if it hits with a bite, it may also attack with a claw on any round it continues to worry its prey. It will also pin its prey down with its huge bulk when worrying it. ***If the

rat crawls atop a human while worrying him, the victim must succeed on a Resistance roll of his CON vs. the rat's SIZ. If he fails, he takes the listed damage; otherwise, he is merely trapped.

Sample Giant Rat

STR 24 CON 18 SIZ 27 POW 10 DEX 13 HP 23 Move 10

Damage Bonus: +2D6

(All other information as above.)

Morlocks, Lesser Independent Race

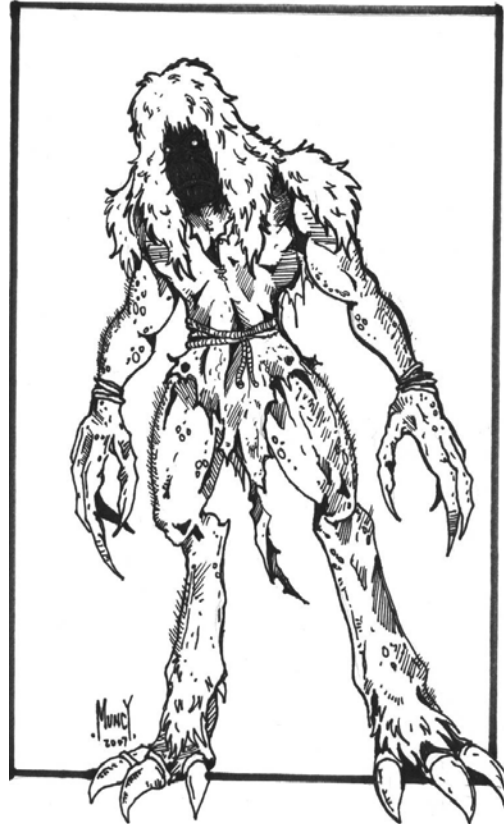
H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* featured beings that are somewhat reminiscent of various creatures of the Mythos: the Morlocks.

These troglodytes live in burrows beneath the earth, are clearly carnivorous, and are described as "bleached, obscene, nocturnal things" that communicate in "whisperings and odd sounds." The Cthulhoid nature of these future-dwellers is clear. Wells describes them as ape-like, stooping beings with flaxen hair on their heads and running down their backs, and with pale chinless faces. Their most prominent features are their great, lidless, pinkish-gray eyes. They are completely nocturnal, and any bright light is painful to them, blinding them completely. They do not appear to be large in stature, and not excessively strong—Wells' Time Traveller was able, with the help of an iron bar, to fight off a great number of them and escape unharmed.

The Morlocks have an affinity for machinery. Their burrows are full of great machines that run continuously. They were capable of examining the Time Machine, taking it apart, and putting it back together, even oiling its parts while it was hidden within the sphinx-like entrance to their burrows. It is possible that from this examination they might have eventually learned to duplicate the Time Machine, perhaps inadvertently (or purposely) returning to the 1890s world of the Time Traveller (or any time in between)—a sobering thought. The sewers of London would make an ideal hideaway for a colony of hungry, technologically advanced Morlocks.

An unarmed Morlock can attack once a round, either with claw or bite. In their natural state in the future they have no enemies, so have only simple weapons. However, their technological expertise is such that, given time, they no doubt could create devastating, advanced weapons.

Morlocks are blinded by any sort of bright light—even a match, though they can navigate easily in the dark. They leave their burrows only on dark nights; even the brightness of a heavily overcast day is painful to their eyes.



MORLOCKS, *Underground Horrors from the Future*

Char.	Dice	Averages
STR	2D6+3	10
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	2D6+3	10
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	2D6+6	13
Hit Points	12	
Move	8	

Weapons: Claws 40%, 1D3; Bite 25%, 1D4; Whip 25%, 1D3

Armor: None.

Spells: None.

Skills: Climb 65%, Hide 55%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Operate Heavy Machinery 60%, Sneak 60%.

SAN: 0/1D6 SAN

Notes: For additional information on the Morlocks, see *Cthulhu By Gaslight*.

Yar-Surmazto, Spectral High Priest of Atlantis



Atlantean priest Yar-Surmazto was a powerful theological leader on the lost continent before its destruction. He was, in fact, the very means of its destruction. Yar-Surmazto had long held his position as High Priest of Atlantis' gods (mixing worship to Poseidon, Atlas, and other classical deities with the worship of Dagon, Cthulhu, and other Great Old Ones). His power and authority kindled such hubris in the priest that he became convinced that he, and he alone, could save Atlantis when a plague of moon creatures, released from rocks bathed by the radiation of a new comet, ravaged the island-nation. Using the forbidden magics he'd learned from ancient tomes that he'd collected, Yar called down mighty ocean waves upon Atlantis, destroying the moon creature infestation by sinking the continent under the ocean. Yar, incidentally, died in the watery holocaust, too, along with the rest of Atlantis' denizens.

The priest had expected to survive the sinking of Atlantis, however, as he'd long used the forgotten magic he'd learned to extend his life many times

beyond that of the normal Atlantean. He thought his magical wards would serve as protection from the death he'd be bringing on his fellows—all for the greater good, of course. He was wrong—and the fate he'd long feared and evaded came upon him. His body destroyed, Yar-Surmazto survived only as a disembodied phantom, condemned to wander the aether alone for all eternity. (His characteristics, therefore, are limited to INT and POW, as for any ghost.) The priest was, of course, driven even more mad that he already was.

Then came a light in the darkness of his survival. Yar came into contact with another mind—one among the living: a medium operating in late-19th century London, England: one Madam Alexandra DeMore. He heard the voice of the woman calling out to him in the darkness and was drawn to it like a fly to flypaper. Unfortunately, he found himself trapped, very much like said fly. Because of his long sojourn in the darkness, Yar's mind and determination had weakened. He was no match for the powerful will of the medium. Fortunately, Madam Alexandra had no goals beyond using Yar to add to her fame as a medium and as a contact to the beyond. She channeled Yar, but primarily to obtain information for a book that, she hoped, would be a best seller in the field of psychic research.

Forced to do her bidding—and hating every second of it—Yar reluctantly related his story, his background, his knowledge of the Mythos, and of several spells, as well as his hand in the destruction of Atlantis. Madam Alexandra copied down every word—although her poor penmanship often distorted Yar's tale, and he was in no mood to correct her. She finally managed to have the book privately published in a limited run as *The Testament of Yar-Surmazto*. Sadly, for the medium, the book flopped in occult circles and quickly became a collector's item—a curiosity and a mere footnote in the history of the psychic sciences of the Victorian era. The result, along with the continuing influence of Yar upon her mind, finally drove Madam Alexandra mad, and she took her own life by throwing herself into the Thames.

Yar was cast back into the darkness, alone again. But his contact with DeMore had somehow strengthened him, enabling him to regain some of his old psychic power. And so he sought yet another mind, one that would be more pliable—one that he could control and, eventually, take over so that he could live again. He found that mind when he was

drawn in the early years of the 1920s to a young wandering occultist named Evo Simpson. Unlike Madam Alexandra, Evo could channel the priest enough so that Yar could walk, talk, and breathe—at least temporarily—among the living once more. But unfortunately for the Atlantean, his formerly iron strength of will was still deteriorated from his imprisonment over the millennia. He could do nothing but inhabit Evo's body for short periods of time, following Evo's will, even though it was weaker than Madam Alexandra's and Yar was stronger now than when he met the woman.

Frustrated by his continuing failure, the high priest was again reduced to nothing more than a tool of divination and entertainment, this time for a frivolous mountebank, as Yar saw Evo. This galled the prideful priest, and he resolved to play along with Evo until such time as he was strong enough to take full possession of the medium's body. Then he could finally live again freely and attain once more the greatness he deserved. And that time is near. Already, the priest finds that he can sometimes fully take over Evo's body, relegating the medium to passenger and making Yar its pilot. But Evo has always been able to regain control—at least so far.

As Yar continues to scheme to possess Evo's body permanently, he has also come to despise even more the state of deathly limbo in which he's trapped, especially after those times he's momentarily controlled Simpson's body—to see, hear, taste, smell, and feel again, to breathe in air and feel the warmth of the sun on real, tangible flesh. The worst thing that could happen to him now would be to “die” yet again and return to his former state of nothingness. That is why he continues to play along with Evo, helping out the medium and his friends by dispensing arcane knowledge when called upon to do so. (This is assuming the mood strikes him.) And because he plans to take it for his own, he is very protective of Evo's body.

Should anything fatal happen to Evo, however, especially while he's possessing him, Yar-Surmazto will attempt to leap into the nearest Investigator (or NPC) and possess his (or her) body. (Treat such an occurrence the same as if Evo has been possessed by the priest—see below. If the person he is trying to possess resists the first time, he will try someone else; he can't attempt it with the same person again.) The priest's first target, should Evo die, will be whatever Investigator appears to be the greatest threat to Yar—someone able to magically expel him or otherwise

affect him. If he fails to possess that individual, he'll try again and again until he runs out of nearby bodies or is somehow defeated through other means. Finally, if unable to possess anyone, Yar-Surmazto will be expelled back into the aether for eternity.

(Keeper's Notes: If your campaign is set today, assume that Yar did indeed attempt to possess Evo but failed and was expelled back into limbo. Some 80 years later, however, the priest has discovered that he can again access those in the physical world who are especially in tune with the mystical—i.e., have a high POW, know several spells, own a magic point battery, have read a number of Mythos books, etc. If Yar senses him in the void, the priest will attempt again to contact someone so attuned, ostensibly to act as a spirit guide and source of arcane knowledge and wisdom. The Keeper should allow Yar first to come in dreams to whichever Investigator most fits this profile. Eventually, if the character seems accepting of him, Yar will offer to help the Investigator in his occult studies—and as an agent against the Mythos. The first few times that the Investigator attempts to channel Yar, the high priest will behave as he's presented himself—even to the point of using his spells against whatever nemesis threatens the Investigator. He will also attempt to make POW vs. POW rolls to influence the character to stay out of harm's way until Yar is strong enough to take over the character—he doesn't want to waste time starting over with a new channeler. Yar operates as described in the following notes.)

Special Notes: To summon Yar-Surmazto, the Investigator must go into a trance and make a roll POW-3 x 5%. If successful, the Atlantean priest channels through his body, and he loses 1 SAN. At that point, the Keeper takes over his character until the trance is broken. Because he is now awake in the Investigator's body while the character sleeps, someone else must question Yar. The channeler, however, rolls to determine whether Yar responds. For the first question asked Yar, roll POW-1 x 5% to get an answer. Each subsequent roll costs another -1 to the POW roll for an answer. (Even though it's part of his scheme, Yar-Surmazto isn't happy being so manipulated and this makes him reluctant to truly help—unless something really catches his interest. Usually, he'll give as little information as he can and still appear to be a helpful servant.) If any roll is missed, Yar-Surmazto takes control of the Investigator's body, and the character must roll half

his POW x 5% to regain control; the character channeling Yar can try to regain control every 5 rounds or whenever the Keeper determines, if the group is not in combat. (Until the Investigator rolls half POW x 5%, the Keeper controls the character.) If the Investigator retains (or regains) control, he can roll POW-3 x 5% at any time to end the trance (and send Yar back into Limbo for now).

(For more information about Evo Simpson or Yar-Surmazto—and the priest's second confrontation with the moon creatures—see the M.U. monograph, *Menace from the Moon*.)

Yar-Surmazto, age 12,147, Dead Atlantean High Priest

INT 17 POW 38 (+ that of whom he's possessing)

Mental Disorder: Megalomania, Thantaphobia (fear of death)

Damage Bonus: As whomever he is possessing at the time

Weapons: As whomever he is possessing at the time

Skills: Archeology 45%, Astronomy 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 65%, History (Atlantean) 65%, Law (Atlantean) 50%, Medicine 40%, Natural History (Atlantean) 80%, Occult 85%; access to all other skills known by whomever he is possessing, at -5%.

Spells: Alter Weather, Breath of the Deep, Cause Disease, Cause/Cure Blindness, Cloud Memory, Contact Deep One, Create Mist of Releh, Create Scrying Window (Atlantis), Wave of Oblivion (*Optional:* Any other spell the Keeper desires).

Notes: Yar's physical characteristics—STR, CON, DEX, etc.—are the same as those of whomever he is possessing. Otherwise, he has only INT and POW.

Demons—Immaterial Threats from Hell

In *Call of Cthulhu*, demons are members of an extra-dimensional race of beings, vaguely similar in nature to Lloigor. They are far more ubiquitous, however, because they're not tied down to specific areas, as are Lloigor. (Although they do tend to congregate in certain locations—old houses, swamps, graveyards, and so on.) These spirits are normally intangible and

invisible, though capable of manifesting themselves briefly as ugly, demonic beings. They are, in fact, more correctly known as *Daimon* (“die-moan”) or *Daimonion*—Greek for *devils* or, transliterated into Latin, *daemon* and into English as *demon*. In Hebrew, they were called *dybbuks*—disembodied spirits. They are the possessing devils of the Bible and the daimons and djinns of mythology. Extra-biblical and rabbinical sources identify them as the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim—the “giants” of Genesis Chapter 6—who perished in the flood of Noah and now seek new bodies to inhabit. They have been known throughout history—and too quickly explained away by modern, “rational” science. But just like the denizens of the Mythos, demons, too, exist, just beyond our plane. Unlike many Cthulhoid beings, however, they can—and do—enter our dimension at will.

Demons are invisible and intangible in our world (and no mortal has ever visited theirs and returned to tell of it), so they have no physical characteristics except DEX. Like ghosts, wraiths, and similar creatures, they possess varying amounts of INT and POW. Smaller demons, or *Daimonions*, may be rather stupid, easily outsmarted, and of limited POW (human average at best). The larger demons, or *Daimons*, on the other hand, can be wickedly intelligent, possessing great amounts of POW—as much or more so than Lloigor (although unable to drain magic points from surrounding humans as do Lloigor). If demons possess a human (or an animal, which is possible, too), they may add the individual's magic point total to their own as long as the possession continues.

Demons can create telekinetic effects similar to the Lloigor. (See the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook for details.) Demons, however, can always create 1 telekinetic STR point for every magic point expended. They can also cause physical damage to an Investigator—“biting” him psychically—by overcoming him in a magic point duel. (Points devoted to the duel are temporarily expended, up to the amount the target used to defend from the attack.) If successful, every additional magic point put into an attack, above that lost in the duel, does 1D6 physical bite damage to the target on a hit. (The chance of a successful hit is the demon's DEX x 3%.)

A demon may possess a person (or animal) by matching its magic points vs. those of the being it attempts to possess. If the demon's roll on the

Resistance table succeeds, the person is possessed. No magic points are lost by the demon if possession succeeds, and it gains full access to the possessed's MPs. Once in possession, a demon attempts to conceal its presence to others as long as possible. But except when it allows the possessed some freedom, the demon is totally in control. The possessed individual may not even realize he is possessed, but often finds himself compelled to say and do things he doesn't wish to. He may attribute this to some other supernatural agency—a curse or mind-control spell. (To realize he is possessed, he must succeed in an Occult roll or INT x 3%—but only after possession has been suggested to him, either by another character or an occult or Mythos tome).

If an Investigator determines he is possessed, the spirit within him immediately takes total control—effectively making him a Keeper character until the demon leaves—or toys with him, taking total control only if the Investigator seeks help or tries to tell someone of his plight (or the demon wants to do something nefarious with his body). Being possessed by a demon requires a SAN roll for 1/1D8 SAN, but an Investigator need not roll until he realizes he *is* possessed or until the spirit releases him. (If the Keeper wishes, he may require a POW vs. POW roll for the demon to take total possession of an individual; this would apply only to demons with a POW equal to, lower than, or up to five points higher than that of the Investigator. Demons with POW scores higher than that should be able to take total possession at will.)

More than one demon can possess an individual, though additional ones must either be invited in by the one already in possession (the dominant one if more than one are there) or win a POW vs. POW roll against the one currently in control. Multiple spirits may cause an Investigator so possessed to develop multiple personalities, although only the most powerful demon is in actual control, unless it allows others to emerge from time to time.

Once a demon possesses an individual, it can physically manifest through the character's body. It can change the sound of his voice (so that a female Investigator speaks with a male voice or vice versa) and even temporarily change facial features or body shape, within certain limits. (A character won't become so distorted that he no longer resembles a human shape, though he or she could superficially resemble the opposite sex, a much older or younger individual, or someone else completely.) The demon

can also cause a possessed character to float in the air, spin around, perform physically impossible contortions of his body, and resist sleep, hunger, pain, or injury, all without ill effect as long as the demon is in him. (If the possessed is injured seriously and the demon leaves, all damage done to him prior to the demon's departure takes effect.) It can also cause wounds to open up on his body and bleed or heal over, as it wills. (It performs these feats by expending telekinetic STR points, as above.)

The demon can change a character's SIZ, APP, or voice by expending magic points (its own or the possessed individual's), spending 1 MP for 1 point SIZ or APP changed. One magic point is all that's necessary to change a character's voice. The initial change of features or voice lasts for one hour unless the demon allows them to return to normal sooner. Thereafter, retaining the entire change costs only a single magic point per hour. If the demon decides to change its host's features again without allowing them first to revert to their original appearance, it costs only half the normal magic points to make such a change.

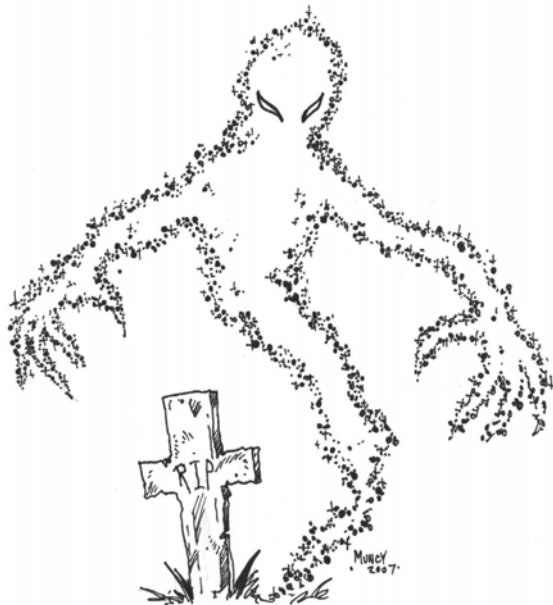
If a demon possesses a character, it can control the person's thoughts, mind, actions, or feelings at will, even if not yet in total control. After the initial possession, nothing else is required to hold and control a person, either intermittently or full-time. The invading spirit has full access to that individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities and can cast any spell that person knows, even if the demon didn't know it before possessing him. If more than one Daimonion is possessing an individual, the strongest is the dominant one, and the others can manifest only if it allows them to. Usually no more than one Daimonion possesses a single person, but it may share him with any number of Daimonion, over which it has "command."

Despite their seemingly immense power, demons are limited in their ability to affect humans. Except for those possessed, demons cannot affect mortals unless (1) they are called up, as in a séance; (2) the areas in which they congregate are invaded or disturbed; or (3) a person "invites" them into his life. An "invitation" may be made, consciously or not, by engaging in moral depravity; overindulging in drink or drugs; living a mean and evil life; or even by delving too deeply into occult matters—studying old grimoires and magical texts; playing with Ouija boards, Tarot cards, or similar divining aids; or allowing oneself to be hypnotized or mesmerized

repeatedly (so as to discern “past lives” or “alien” abductions or “to commune with higher powers”).

Once it’s in possession of an individual, certain things that affect the person physically also affect the demon. Spells or other methods that affect a possessed individual’s POW, for example, also affect the possessing demon. Certain drugs that deaden parts of the possessed character’s brain (where the demon normally resides) incapacitate the spirit as well. And, of course, killing the individual hosting a demon gets rid of the spirit once and for all—although the deceased can hardly appreciate his new “freedom.”

Some demons have an aversion to certain “holy” items. Holy water, crucifixes, and other religious symbols may be proof against possession by a demon and even drive one away. Unfortunately, just as many demons seem immune to such protections. (The Keeper decides whether such measures are effective against a particular demon, but in general, they may be effective against daimonion but not daimons.) Powerful protections against Cthulhoid entities, such as Elder Signs or Starstones of Mnar, are as effective against demons as against minions of the Mythos, and employing them is total proof against possession—and may even expel a demon if combined with a rite of exorcism. Certain spells with nonphysical effects are effective against these spiritual entities as well, though physical attacks affect only the host.



A demon can temporarily take on a physical form if it desires—normally that of an extremely hideous creature, occasionally wreathed in fire and brimstone; this costs 8 magic points, plus 2 for sounds and 1 for a sulfuric odor. If a physical manifestation of a demonic

spirit occurs, use the value for POW for other unlisted characteristics, too.

Daimon, Greater Independent Race

Char	Roll	Average
INT	4D6+6	20
POW	5D6+6	23
DEX	3D6	10-11

Hit Points: Special (see below)

Move: Special (see below)

Daimonion, Lesser Independent Race

Char	Roll	Average
INT	1-3D6	3-11
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	3D6	10-11

Hit Points: Special (see below)

Move: Special (see below)

Weapons: Telekinetic throw, DEX x 3%, Damage variable (by SIZ of thrown object); Psychic bite, DEX x 3%, 1D6 per magic point + M.P. vs. MP expense; Possession, POW vs. POW (or automatic), individual possessed; Dematerialize, special (see below).

Armor: In their natural, immaterial state, no physical weapon, can affect a demon. A possessed host’s body can be affected normally by such attacks, but only the host’s death affects the spirit and then only to drive it away. Enchanted weapons *do* damage these spirits normally—as well as their hosts.

Spells: A demon may know any number of spells, up to INT in number. Most of these will be transportative, coercive, or damaging spells rather than summoning, binding, and similar spells. (Demons do *not* want to deal with being of the Mythos.) Demons use a variant of the Alter Form spell to transform their hosts.

SAN: In their normal state, demons are invisible, so no SAN loss is possible. Seeing the various poltergeist-like physical manifestations of one costs 0/1D4 SAN. Being possessed costs 1/1D8 SAN points on realization of possession. Seeing a demon’s physical manifestation costs up to 1D6/1D20 SAN, as the forms they take are usually extremely frightening. (The Keeper may decide the entity takes on a less SAN-blasting appearance for

reasons of its own.) Should an Investigator somehow see a Daimon in its own dimension, the maximum SAN loss is given.

Hit Points: If a spell causes hit-point loss or an enchanted weapon is used against a demon, use its POW as hit points. Should the demon lose all its POW as damage, it is destroyed. If a demon's MPs fall to 0, it temporarily disperses, losing its possession of a host. If the host's MP or POW totals fall to 0, he dies, and the spirit is cast loose. Magical attacks against a possessing demon have a 50% chance of affecting the host instead of the spirit. Enchanted weapons always affect the host as well as the demon.

Move: Demons are not bound by our laws of physics; they can instantly teleport anywhere they wish around our planet. (They do so by leaving our dimension and entering the spirit dimension, where they can instantly emerge at any other place on earth.) They can also move freely through all physical barriers. Strong magnetic or other force fields seem to slow them down, perhaps due to the nature of the dimension from where they originate, and may even contain them if the field is strong enough (at least twice the POW of the demon). Effectively, however, they are as swift as thought and nearly impossible to contain.

Dematerialize: Demons can dematerialize objects of various sizes by telekinetically seizing an object and teleporting with it to another location, where they leave it and return instantly. Several entities can work together to teleport an object too big for one. To "dematerialize" a living being, a demon (or several working together) must win a magic point struggle with his victim, unless the spirit is possessing him; if so, no struggle is required. (This is known as *apporting* when a possessed host or victim seems to travel from one place to another instantly.)

Detection: Unless a character possesses psychic powers or is under a spell enabling him to see immaterial objects, only a POW x 1% roll can detect the presence of a demon, either in an area or possessing another character. Roll on first entering the area where demons reside or encountering a possessed individual. If the roll succeeds, the Investigator detects the presence of the demon as a foul odor. (It "stinks" spiritually.) Unless an Investigator has detected such spirits before and knows what the odor indicates, he may need an Occult roll to realize what he's detecting.

Note: See also *Cthulhu By Gaslight*.



“Welcome to Innsmouth. We’re your greeting party.”

NASTY, NICE, OR NEFARIOUS? FIVE NPC ENCOUNTERS

*Five detailed NPCs to aid, assist, threaten,
hinder, or confuse your Investigators*

Characterization is important in RPGs, especially if NPCs are to be more than a series of faceless, two-dimensional encounters, their interaction with player-characters limited to a tiny repertoire of stock speeches and too-predictable actions. This is particularly so in *Call of Cthulhu*: In *CoC*, the proper atmosphere and a cast of fully fleshed-out—if occasionally eccentric or even downright bizarre—individuals can provide the elements that either make or break your scenario. The following pages contain detailed descriptions and *CoC* gaming stats on four such varied NPCs that the author created for his own campaigns. Any Keeper should, with a minimum of difficulty, be able to integrate one or more of these individuals into almost any existing or new *CoC* campaign, either published or of his own devising.

One of these NPCs, Barker, is an out-and-out, tough-to-defeat villain—a dedicated pawn of the Old Ones—who may be used to harass and plague a group of Investigators over the course of several scenarios. Another, Violet, may either become a help or a hindrance to the player-characters, depending on how the Keeper runs her—perhaps even both at the same time, thanks to her unique “condition” and particular insanity. Two others offered here, Altamont and Ahab, may assist the Investigators in any of several ways. But an association with either, especially Altamont, can as easily plunge an investigating team into varying levels of danger above and beyond the norm. (And Investigators do *not* want to get on the agent’s wrong side.) Finally, every campaign needs a Mad Scientist. If yours doesn’t have one yet, try on Kyle T. Oates for size.

While entire scenarios can be devised around any of these four, they can just as easily be incorporated into existing scenarios in which their presence could prove appropriate, with only a bit of ingenuity on the Keeper’s part. Ahab, for instance, could pilot a boat into Insmouth Harbor in any of the scenarios that take place in that cursed town, should Investigators go that route. Or he could, for example, be utilized to ferry a party to Easter Island or R’lyeh in Chaosium’s

Masks of Nyarlathotep campaign, should your Investigators be especially in need of outside aid in saving the world. Barker could be lurking in the wings as a member of the Silver Twilight (*Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*), the Brotherhood of the Beast, or any other cult with which characters might clash. And Violet could pop up in nearly any such scenario to offer aid and comfort to at least one of the troop—before her true nature comes to the fore. If your Investigators are on a mission to the far-flung corners of the British Empire, encounters with Altamont are likely, especially if there’s any amount of intrigue involved. And Oates, as inventive as he is off-kilter, may pull almost any type of gizmo out of a corner of his cluttered workshop. (Hopefully, one that’s helpful.) The possibilities are multi-fold, limited only by your imagination.

Each of these individuals was originally created and used to great effectiveness as NPCs in the course of the author’s own *CoC* campaign. (Violet Spade was actually the result of an unfortunate magical amalgamation between one player’s Investigator and another NPC; the combination worked extremely well after the player himself declined the challenge of further running the unique personality that grew from the fusion.) If sufficient creative thought is applied to the task, Barker, Spade, Ahab, Oates, and Altamont can deviously complicate and enliven your own campaign in a similar manner.

(*Note*: Ahab, Altamont, Barker, Oates, and Violet appear in other M.U. monographs by this author—Ahab in *Return of the Ripper* and Oates in *Menace from the Moon*, for example. Keepers who expect to run those two scenarios but who introduce these characters before such appearances should be careful to keep them alive, unless wishing to resurrect them later or to replace them with similar NPCs of your own. If you’ve already run those scenarios and either or both characters were killed, you can still use them but need to rename them—perhaps they are Ahab’s twin brother, Horatio, or Oates’ cousin Lyle.)

CYRUS BARKER, JR.

Before a fateful—and nearly fatal—encounter with the Cthulhu Mythos, Cyrus Barker, Jr., was a moderately successful private investigator. He was following in the footsteps of his father, who'd been a detective in turn-of-the-century London, England, and his mother, a Pinkerton agent. Barker's mother left his father and emigrated to the United States shortly after the boy was born. They settled in Boston, Mass., where Barker was raised as an American. His childhood was singularly unremarkable, except for an uncanny ability to be at the right place at the right time and a dogged determination to pursue any goal to which he'd set his mind—through Hell and back if necessary. Both qualities served him in good stead when he later decided to become a private investigator—over the strenuous objections of his mother, who'd had more than enough of that profession with Barker's father and her own career. Even though he'd never known his father, Barker remained steadfast in his decision to enter what he considered “the family trade.” This estranged his mother, who finally left Boston to return to her hometown out West, where she could live out her last years away from the disappointment her son had become to her.

Barker buried his own feelings at his mother's departure in his new work, to which he devoted all his energies. He soon became a competent, if not brilliant, private detective, who received a fair share of the private-eye business in the Boston area. His investigations occasionally even took him on cases throughout New England and as far away as New York City. It was on one of these farther-ranging cases that Barker had an encounter that completely changed his life.

When asked by a client to investigate a mysterious death at the Greenwood Asylum in Greenwood, Mass., the hapless detective pried deeper than certain parties wished. While scouting around outside the asylum, Barker was captured by the institution's director, a servant of the Great Old One Arwassa, the Silent Screamer. The director, an alchemist/sorcerer of some power, injected the detective with one of his blasphemous discoveries—proto-shoggoth tissue—causing Barker to metamorphose into a half-human, half-shoggoth creature. This, of course, drove the detective hopelessly and evilly insane.

Able now to change at will from his normal human form to that of proto-shoggoth, the insane Barker

joined his new master in a plan to unleash an army of proto-shoggoths on the world. Barker was soon back to Boston to recruit the occult assistance of the Hermetic Order of the Silver Twilight in the nefarious plan. While the detective was away, however, another group of Investigators sent to check out the goings-on at the asylum thwarted the evil scheme of Barker's master. They killed the fiend and destroyed the laboratory that held the secret of the proto-shoggoth conversion method. His mission thus ended, Barker decided to stay on with the Lords of the Silver Twilight, soaking up magical and forbidden knowledge from them and their mentor, Carl Stanford. With the help of their hermetic secrets, imparted by Nyarlathotep and other dark entities, Barker eventually learned how to transform himself completely into a real, full-scale shoggoth. He picked up a few other nasty tricks as well.

Barker can now become a shoggoth at will, the transformation taking three combat rounds. During this time, he cannot move or otherwise act. Anyone seeing this transformation will lose 1/1D4 SAN points as they watch the man melt and reform into a monster. (This cost is in addition to the regular SAN costs for seeing a shoggoth.)

To accomplish the transformation, Barker uses a special Alter Form spell, restricted to his personal alteration into shoggoth form only. The change drains all the magic points the detective has remaining at the moment, except 1, though it still enables him to match the equivalent of his full normal magic point total on any Resistance roll (for defensive purposes only). Barker will be unable to actively cast spells in shoggoth form until enough magic points regenerate normally for him to do so. Barker can hold himself in shoggoth form as long as he wishes, though if he remains so more than 48 hours he must expend magic points to reverse the change; otherwise, it costs him nothing to resume human form. As a shoggoth, Barker has all the characteristics and abilities of a normal member of the unnatural species.

In addition to his other shoggoth capabilities, Barker can “split off” sections of his shoggoth form, at no significant harm to himself, and mold them into apparently inanimate objects. Each such offshoot reduces his shoggoth SIZ up to 1 SIZ point, which regenerates within 24 hours, whether he remains a shoggoth or not. Even in human form, Barker is psionically linked with each of these parts

and can see and hear through them as though he were there in person. He will also know exactly where each piece is at any given time, as long as the link is maintained. (Only destroying the separate shoggoth part, killing Barker himself, or separating the two by several million miles can break the link.)

Barker usually shapes these shoggoth sections into the form of business cards (10 dozen per SIZ point sacrificed), which he then hands out to—or slips onto—those on whom he wishes to keep tabs. The “cards” are, to all appearances, just that. They have the correct texture, even the correct smell of printed business cards (tasting is not advised, though). They cannot, however, be torn; instead, they bend like rubber and finally stretch if pulled hard enough (minimum STR 13 required to do so). If stretched, however, they will snap back into shape and, if dropped, attempt to mindlessly crawl away like an inch worm. Anyone observing this loses 0/1D3 SAN. The cards *can* be cut up by any sharp weapon that does at least 1D4 damage, but this does not destroy them; within 1D2 days, each piece will grow into a completely new, intact duplicate of the original. The shoggoth-cards can be destroyed only by burning, and will “scream” when touched by the flame and until consumed. (SAN loss 0/2D3 by anyone hearing this and knowing the source.)

If a “card” or piece of it is somehow ingested, the person who does so will appear to die. Within 24 hours, however, the corpse, unless completely cremated, metamorphoses into a man-sized proto-shoggoth, totally under Barker’s control. It costs Barker no magic points to create, maintain his psionic link with, or control a shoggoth-part or a victim who has been transformed by eating one. Barker usually keeps a dozen or so of these special “business cards” on hand (12 + 1D6) for surveillance purposes, creating more if the need arises. The parts themselves are virtually immortal unless destroyed by fire or magical means that can affect shoggoths.

In his normal human form, Barker will seem relatively sane and even mundane—a typical, doggedly determined, hard-nosed P.I. He will, however, act arrogantly and egotistically, more so than his lot in life would indicate. This is especially so in interactions with other detectives: Barker will talk as though he’s the old pro and the other P.I. a rank, bumbling amateur, whether that’s the case or not. He’ll constantly demean the other’s accomplishments—or lack thereof—and play up his failures, as if such were to be expected of anyone but

the Master, Barker himself. He may go so far as to suggest that the other detective give up his own practice and perhaps Barker can “find a place for him” in *his* agency—as a junior partner, of course.

If the player-characters are investigating Cthulhoid activities in which Barker is involved—obviously or otherwise—he’ll tend to toy with them. He’ll show up at places where they’re searching for clues, “coincidentally” running into them on the street, or in a restaurant, taunting them by his presence in places he shouldn’t have been able to find them—all to unnerve and confuse them and make them easier prey when he’s ready to pounce in full force. He’ll of course use his shoggoth-cards to keep track of them, relying, too, on his own knack of being in the right place at the right time if he can’t plant or keep a business card on them. (This ability is an innate, low-grade, unconsciously operated psychic power, further heightened by Barker’s occult dabblings and shoggoth-links. To determine whether the power is operating, the Keeper may roll against Barker’s Luck—or simply place him wherever desired.)

Even in his human form, Barker cannot be hurt by ordinary weapons anymore than can a shoggoth. If attacked (a distinct possibility once he’s dogged nervous investigators long enough), he’ll simply smile at his attacker as bullet holes appear in his body and appear otherwise unharmed. (0/1D2 SAN loss to any observer.) If his hit points are reduced to 0 while in human form, Barker automatically transforms into a shoggoth, as described previously. Once the transformation is complete, he’ll then attack his antagonists as a shoggoth if they’ve been foolish enough to stand and watch (or have gone insane or are otherwise unable to flee). Any damage to his human form regenerates while Barker is in monster form, at a rate of 1 hit point/hour that he remains a shoggoth.

If seriously wounded while in shoggoth form by magic, enchanted weapons, or fire (more than three-quarters of his hit points lost), so that death seems a real possibility, Barker will appear to succumb. He will feign death, ceasing all movement and activity. If the Investigators have dealt with shoggoths before, they should be fooled, as the usual mindless specimens cease attacking only after they *are* dead. If they fail to make certain he’s truly finished, however, either through magical means or simply by continuing to attack until there’s no question of it, Barker will remain quiescent until all his damage has



regenerated, even if this means letting the Investigators escape—this time.

Should this occur, Barker will now have marked his attackers for certain death and will doggedly and determinedly pursue *that* goal, no matter how long it takes to track the perpetrators down. True to form, however, once he's located his victims, he'll taunt them before he destroys them. This will take the form of mysterious "phone calls from the dead," threatening letters or telegrams (which may or may not be written on shoggoth tissue), and brief glimpses of himself watching from afar that Barker allows the Investigators. These will continue over a period of weeks, or even months, before he finally closes in.

A Keeper thus can use Barker as a continuing threat through several adventures beyond his initial appearance or as a menacing distraction to overconfident Investigators who think they've dealt with him once and for all. Barker will drop a phone call here, a threatening note there, and so on, simply to unnerve the investigators and add to their paranoia in adventures in which he plays no actual part—until the Keeper judges it's time for the final confrontation. (This should occur when a party least expects it: after they've not heard from Barker for a while and have experienced a major victory; when things are getting too quiet or seem too safe; or when they've taken what appears to be the easy way out to avoid some other deadly confrontation.)

An investigative group's initial encounter with Barker could come during the course of any regular adventure in which there's a possibility of crossing paths with him as a rival detective—perhaps with him even seeming as an ally. Any other Private Investigator character who hails from around the Boston area might have heard of—or even be acquainted with—Barker, if he makes a Know roll. If so, he'll remember Barker as having been a good detective who's changed recently—become more shady and less scrupulous in his dealings; at the same time, his financial status seems to have improved. (If players infer possible mob connections from this, all the better.) Barker could first be encountered as a member of the Silver Twilight Lodge in Boston in Chaosium's *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*; or he could be out for revenge against Investigators who've solved the Greenwood Asylum mystery (originally featured in Chaosium's *The Asylum & Other Tales*). Many possibilities exist.

A Keeper may utilize Barker as a goad to keep Investigators from lingering too long in any one

location, either because they're wasting their time where there's nothing useful to find or because there is *too much* there for them to handle just yet. Conversely, Barker might show up *only* at significant locations, thus marking them as important places worth examining more closely later—if players can put the two together in their minds. (A devious Keeper could then pull a switch, perhaps marking a trap in this fashion.)

Finally, Barker can fill a very important niche in a campaign, that of a continuing menace—an arch-nemesis who confronts the heroes again and again, always managing somehow to escape death, returning to plague then yet another day, much like Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu. In this role Barker can cause the Investigators a great deal of frustration—and give them an even greater feeling of satisfaction when they finally manage to bring down the half-man, half-shoggoth monstrosity at campaign's end.



Cyrus Barker, Jr., Age 28, Private Investigator/Shoggoth (Human Form)

STR 11 CON 16 SIZ 11 DEX 15 APP 9 INT 13
POW 14 EDU 12 SAN 0 HP 14*

*If Hit Points exceeded while in human form, he converts to shoggoth form

Weapons: .38 Revolver 65%, 1D10; Fist 60%, 1D3; Blackjack 60%, 1D6 (plus roll CON x 5% or be knocked unconscious); Grapple 45%

Skills: Bargain 25%; Conceal 45%; Chemistry 15%; Cthulhu Mythos 40%; Credit Rating 35% (but effectively unlimited through Mythos contacts);

Dodge 55%; Drive Automobile 35%; Fast Talk 50%; First Aid 45%; Geology 20%; Hide 30%; Law 40%; Library Use 60%; Listen 55%; Lockpick 55%; Mechanical Repair 35%; Navigation 20%; Pharmacy 25%; Psychology 45%; Sneak 45%; Spot Hidden 60%; Swim 25%; Throw 55%; Track 60% (or Luck roll for psychic tracking).

Spells: Alter Form (from human to shoggoth only); Shrivelling; Contact Mi-Go

Special Ability: Psychic link between Barker and shoggoth sections allow him to know their locations at all times and to “see and hear” through them as though he were on the scene in person.

Equipment: .38 revolver in a shoulder holster; blackjack; pocket watch (his father’s), inscribed “To Cyrus, love Nevada”; lockpick set (adds +20 to Mechanical Repair or Locksmith skill for lockpicking only); 12 + 1D6 shoggoth-section “business cards” (more at office); 12-gauge shotgun (in trunk of car); drives a 1923 sky-blue Packard (a gift from Carl Stanford for his services).

Physical Appearance: Barker stands 5'8" tall and is of medium weight and build. He has medium-length dark-brown hair and wears a thick mustache. His complexion, once healthy, has taken on a sickly pallor in recent months, though he acts as robust as ever. Barker occasionally wears dark glasses due to a condition inherited from his father that causes extreme sensitivity in very bright light (gives a -20% to Spot Hidden in bright light if not wearing the glasses). His dapper clothes always seem as if newly pressed, often because he’s had to replace them after destroying his previous suit when converting into a shoggoth.

Barker’s Shoggoth Form

STR 44 CON 16 SIZ 36 DEX 8 INT 13 POW 14
HP 26

Weapons: Crush 90%, 8D6 (see *CoC* rulebook)

Armor: All nonmagical, physical weapons do only minimum damage; no impales; regenerates 2 hit points/round; fire does half-damage.

SAN: 1D6/1D20

Notes: In his shoggoth form, Barker can speak in a horrid mockery of his normal voice through a fashioned “mouth,” causing an additional 0/1D3 SAN loss. In this form, he moves and acts as any other shoggoth, as described in the *CoC* rulebook.

Non-Shoggoth Option: If you’ve already introduced a human/shoggoth into your campaign and don’t want another one, or simply don’t like the concept, you can also use Barker as a standard human NPC—perhaps even as an ally rather than as a foe—by removing all the shoggoth references and giving him a normal SAN rating. Other adjustments should prove minor.

Other Eras: Barker *files* was designed for use in 1920s campaigns, as the references to various 1920s *CoC* adventures indicate. Moving him to a modern-day campaign would require only a few adjustments to his background (unless the *CoC* scenarios mentioned have also been transplanted to today by a Keeper). He would have been involved with a different cult—any set in the present that the Keeper wishes to borrow from any other adventure—and his transformation into a proto-shoggoth would need to have been handled differently as well. (Perhaps he had a run-in with some Elder Things who used their ancient science to do so.) Give him a modern automobile, make him Cyrus Barker IV instead of Jr., and you’re set to go.

Moving Barker to the 1890s is more difficult and isn’t recommended, as Barker, Jr., would have been but a child then, and his father would still be in active practice as a detective. If you do choose this course, however, assume that *this* Barker is the younger cousin of the 1890s Barker and, coincidentally, has the same first name. (His mother liked it so much, she named her son Cyrus as well.) You can give this Barker a different middle name from that of his cousin (whose middle moniker is Yarborough, by the way). You may also want to obtain the M.U. monograph *Return of the Ripper*, which describes the 1890s Barker in detail. Having two Barkers in your campaign, especially with one a potential ally and this one a dreaded enemy, could cause your Investigators no end of confusion. (Of course, you can always combine this Barker with the 1890s version, with the original detective getting transformed into a proto-shoggoth at some point after he’s first met and aided the Investigators.)

One potentially interesting ploy, if you run Barker, Jr., in the 1920s, is to have his father come out of his retirement and attempt to help the

Investigators stop his transformed son's reign of terror—an emotionally trying situation for the old man at the least.

VIOLET SPADE

Former hard-boiled (and very male) detective, Phillip Spade, always wanted to do the right thing—see justice done, help the innocent, and, incidentally, make a decent-enough living in the process. So he opened up an office and changed his name from the decidedly less hard-boiled Bruce Kohlmann to the manly moniker of Phil Spade—a name that dripped of cheap whiskey, stale cigars, and the heady smell of gunsmoke wafting from a snub-nosed revolver. Unfortunately, the mind of this once rough-and-tumble gumshoe is experiencing a fate the detective would once have declared worse than *death* (had he ever experienced that particular condition rather than bestowing it on a host of cheap hoods and mobsters). Spade is now trapped in the body of a very beautiful, very desirable young woman!

Phillip Spade became the victim of a Mind Transfer spell while attempting to assist an old flame—Violet Staunton. Violet's father, Henry Staunton, had been seduced by the Great Old One, Chaugnar Faugn into becoming the Elephant God's newest companion. (See the *CoC* scenario "The Curse of Chaugnar Faugn," originally in *Curse of the Chthonians* and reprinted in *The Cthulhu Casebook*, for details.) Driven mad by the experience, Staunton desperately used a Mind Transfer spell to take over his daughter's body before his was finally consumed by the Great Old One. The spell put him in Violet's body—and doomed his daughter. Staunton was too far gone to care about anything but becoming a man again, so s/he seduced Spade and used the same spell on the detective, swapping bodies with the unsuspecting gumshoe.

Naturally less than thrilled in the state s/he now found *hirself*, Spade managed to convince hir fellow Investigators that s/he was, indeed, who s/he claimed to be. Together, they sought out the former Henry/Violet Staunton in an attempt to get Spade's body back. Unfortunately for all concerned, Staunton had been drawn back into thrall by Chaugnar Faugn while in Spade's body, and the Great Old One's influence had twisted the face of Phil Spade into an obscene parody of the Elephant God's own visage. Spade's body, now deformed almost beyond redemption, was lost to him. S/he got hir revenge,

bitter though it was, when Staunton was finally devoured by Chaugnar Faugn. The group managed to defeat the Great Old One, sending the god on a one-way (they hoped) trip into the time stream. But Phil Spade was no more—only the mind of the man in the body of the lovely Violet.

Well-to-do financially, as the body s/he—*she*—now inhabits inherited enough from Violet's late father to make her independent, Spade spends much of her time and fortune searching the world for a way to become male again, either through some kind of spell that would transform her female body into a man's or another Mind Transfer spell that she could use—reluctantly—on another male to take his body. (Staunton had taken the secret of the Mind Transfer spell with him to his grave. And the book he'd learned it from had been destroyed in the conflict with the Great Old One.) With "Spade" legally dead, she could do nothing but take over Violet's life, as disturbing as that was to the hard-boiled sleuth locked inside the eye-pleasing facade. Fortunately, their past relationship gave Spade enough knowledge to pull off the masquerade, and she could blame any lapses on Violet's mental condition following the loss of the two men in her life.

One of her first acts, after going through the motions of a memorial service for her father—and a more heartfelt burial of the body of Phil Spade (in a closed casket ceremony, of course)—was to legally change her last name from Staunton to Spade. She explained it as a tribute to the detective who'd saved her life—and whom she'd intended to marry. (The details she kept fuzzy, but with her father's tragic death, no one questioned her.) She considered changing Violet's first name to Phyllis (so she could still be called "Phyl"), but her comrades convinced her that would be a bit too much; after all, she wouldn't want to end up trapped both in a woman's body and an insane asylum, should anyone wonder over her mental state in completely adopting the name of a dead detective.

Finally, her options limited, Violet Spade set out to find a way out of her gender-bending predicament. Although she kept in touch with her former companions, she could tell that they felt uncomfortable in her presence, knowing that a male mind inhabited the attractive woman's form. So she set out to find others willing to delve into supernatural situations that, she hoped, would eventually lead to the restoration of her manhood. With her ample bankroll, Violet financially backed a

number of expeditions into the unknown—the only stipulation being that she be allowed to accompany the party. The most promising of these seemed to be connected to Miskatonic University, so she became a benefactor of that institution, again tying her monetary gifts to her presence on future excursions into the mysterious.

Unfortunately, not all was well in Spade's psyche—not too surprising under the circumstances. The mental conflict resulting from having a male mind stuck in a healthy, beautiful female body has slowly unhinged Spade, causing her to develop a split personality. Part of the time, she's Phil inside—hard, crude, *very* touchy about any references to her forced womanhood, and desperate to regain her manhood. The rest of the time, however, she has metamorphosed totally into Violet: soft, warm, seductive—and *all* woman. Worse, she is totally unaware of the two personalities and is constantly at a loss to understand (as Phil) why the guy she almost decked for making a pass at her two days ago is acting like they were lovers the night before, or why (as Violet) her lover of two nights before has a black eye and won't come near her today, depending on which personality is now dominant.

Furthermore, while she *remembers* all objective events that occurred while lost in her alternate personality, the interpretation is filtered through the subjective viewpoint of whichever persona is currently dominant. What her female (Violet) persona would recall as a romantic liaison with a male Investigator, her male (Phil) persona might remember as an all-night poker game or drinking bout with one of the guys. Her constant switches in personality can thus be quite confusing to player-Investigators, particularly depending on which persona they first encounter. This is especially true since, even in her male persona, Violet must attempt (albeit poorly) to play the part of a woman—a very hard, mannish-acting woman, at best—as she can't bring herself to tell anyone what has really happened to her, partly out of embarrassment but also out of fear of being locked up in an asylum as a mad woman. As Phil, she would reveal her predicament to Investigators only if she thought it would encourage them to help her obtain occult or magical knowledge that would enable her to regain her manhood—or if they somehow found out on their own. (And she would deny it still, as long as that seemed possible.) As Violet, of course, she has come to accept and fully enjoy her new condition, would never reveal her former existence, and would

deny it if anyone learned of it. (She would do this even to one of her former comrades who was there at the time of the mind transfer.)

In her male persona, Violet might be encountered when Investigators search for magical or Cthulhoid information in a library or private collection. She may offer to help the Investigators in their quest with any spells she may have learned in her studies (Keeper's discretion); with a place to stay or hide if they're in trouble; or with her not-inconsiderate financial resources. She would offer these boons in exchange for any magical knowledge or leads the Investigators might have that may further her goal to become a man again. Should she be taught or otherwise learn the Mind Transfer spell, however, she will attempt to exchange minds with the Investigator whose body she best feels she could live in (probably the most manly). She will thus try to get as close as possible to him (unwittingly aided in this goal by her lusty female persona) and then exchange minds with him once she feels she's learned enough to pass as him.

Depending on where her head is at the moment (Keeper's discretion)—and how much trouble or amorous attentions the Investigator has given her—the newly male Spade may then attempt to dispose in some manner of the Investigator now trapped in her body—kill him/her, sell her to slavers or cultists, and so on. Unfortunately, even with his manhood restored, Violet still retains her split personality and will be appalled to find herself in a male body after her female persona takes over again. This state could lead to several see-saw mind transfers for the hapless Investigator chosen as her target (since her female persona will probably blame the Investigator for the change—thinking perhaps he desired her body in more ways than one). On the other hand, she might chose to switch the male Investigator's body she's now in with that of a female Investigator, *really* mixing things up.

If she's in her female persona, Violet might be encountered about anywhere that a fairly well-to-do, and very beautiful, woman would be found. If the Investigators meet her this way, she may very well form a romantic attachment to one of the males in the party (probably the same one with whom her male persona would choose to exchange bodies). And she would likely offer them her assistance, as above, plus her warm company for the chosen Investigator. (How her male persona later interprets the attachment is up to the Keeper.)



Violet Spade can thus be used to assist, confuse, hinder, or even threaten your Investigators, depending on how she is introduced into a campaign and what persona has control at any given time. To determine the latter, the Keeper may roll 1D100 for a 50-50 chance of either persona being dominant at the initial encounter and again once at the beginning of each day. The personas usually change over during the night, while Violet is asleep, though other traumatic events—loss of consciousness; SAN loss, injury, and so on—might also trigger a switch. (Even undergoing the Mind Transfer process with another Investigator may put her female persona in control—now, to her horror, in a male body.)



Violet Spade, Age 28, Dilettante

STR 10 CON 15 SIZ 9 DEX 16 INT 11 POW 10
APP 18 EDU 12 SAN 37 HP 12

Mental Disorder: Split Personality

Skills: Art (Sing) 65%; Climb 70%; Conceal 25%; Credit Rating 85%; Dodge 75%; First Aid 60%; Hide 60%; Sneak 45%; Fast Talk 50%; Jump 55%; Law 45%; Listen 50%; Other Language: French 30%; Ride 45%; Spot Hidden 55%; Swim 50%; Throw 60%; Track 25%.

Weapons: Fist 60%, 1D3; Blackjack 45%, 1D8; .22 Rifle 45%, 1D6+2; .22 Automatic 35%, 1D6; Bow 40%, 1D6.

Personal Equipment: .22 Rifle and 10 reloads; .22 automatic and 10 magazines (in purse); Large purse w/makeup, etc.; Suitcase with clothing, etc.; Full suit of men's clothing (in suitcase); Spade's P.I. license (in purse); First-Aid Kit (in suitcase); Cigars and matches (in purse); Blackjack (in purse); 1D10 x \$1,000 ready cash. (Plus pretty much whatever else she needs that can be purchased.)

Notes: Violet often wears male clothing when Phil is dominant, usually keeping Phil's favorite wrinkled suit, now tailored to fit her new body, close at hand. When she is dominant, she dresses as femininely as possible.

Other Eras: Violet was created as a 1920s character, along with Phil Spade, but she could be moved to the 1890s or the present without much alteration. In either era, Spade might have been a bit less "hard-boiled" than in the '20s, but otherwise the male persona would be unchanged. In the 1890s, being trapped in the body of a woman would be even more of a stigma for a man than in the '20s, as women were far less liberated, even at the end of the Victorian era, especially in Britain, than three decades later. So it is less likely that Violet would wear men's clothing then—although with her inheritance, she could afford to flaunt convention, following the lead of George Sand and other "new" women. Conversely, today a man trapped in a woman's body would be far less of a stigma, although Spade still would not feel comfortable as a woman given his past personality. (Neither would s/he consider a sex-change operation, despite its availability today, except as a last resort should all else fail.) She could wear male clothing as much as she pleased today without being stared at (except for her beauty).

CAPTAIN SINBAD AHAB

If Ahab ever had a first name other than "Sinbad," no one knows it—and he isn't telling. Captain of a small sloop, Ahab is the very epitome of the grizzled old seadog—some claim he was the original model for Popeye's "Poopdeck Pappy." Indeed, Ahab closely resembles that cartoon character, minus the pipe and the overdeveloped forearms—often boasting a scruffy, white beard with a gruff weathered face, old captain's hat perched atop a thinning white-haired head, high-pitched, grating voice, and a tendency to call everyone, regardless of

age, “laddie.” But the lively twinkle in Ahab’s eye and the quickness of his high-pitched “Hee, hee, hee!” laugh belie the stern dourness of the expression one is likely to behold upon first meeting the crusty old salt.

Although he may often seem to be a simple-minded, bumbling, drunken old buffoon, Ahab is actually quite shrewd. Much of his bumbling, good-naturedness and loud boastfulness (once he gets to know and trust someone) is an act to throw others off and make them underestimate the crafty old sailor. Ahab is, however, very audacious and prone to act or speak without thinking, which often gets him and anyone else with him in trouble. Ordinarily, Ahab is capable of getting himself out of trouble almost as easily as he gets himself in it, though it rarely appears so. He’ll often solicit the aid of his companions of the moment to help him, even if such help is not needed, as he loves few things better than a good old fashioned brawl. (In fact, Ahab will often provoke a fight deliberately, making it seem accidental, just for the fun of it.)

The one thing Ahab likes better than a good fight is a good drink—or even a bad drink, as long as it’s booze. Ahab is one of those rare individuals who has an incredible tolerance for alcohol, and can drink nearly all comers under the table before he himself becomes intoxicated. Investigators seeing Ahab swig booze like it was water and who thus conclude it to be a weak mixture and then attempt to emulate the sailor soon find themselves flat on their backs with a severe hangover. In spite of his tolerance, Ahab loves the sauce, and he will loudly denounce prohibition and the fools who thought it up whenever the subject is mentioned. Ahab will drink anything alcoholic—in fact, if he *won’t* drink something, it isn’t in the least fit for human consumption.

To tide himself over between on-shore stops at domestic speakeasies and foreign bars, Ahab keeps a still in the engine room of his boat, where he brews his own special liquor—Ahab’s Folly, as he calls it—which makes white lightening seem like soda pop. (Anyone drinking it must roll one-half CON x 5% or become roaring drunk—even on one glass.) The still is so cleverly disguised, a roll on Mechanical Repair skill (at -10%) is necessary to discern it from part of the boat’s engine. When Ahab *does* get drunk, it exaggerates his scrappiness or his wild good humor, depending on the situation (50% chance of either), but almost always results in problems for those with him (especially when he finally passes out at a crucial

moment—like when piloting his boat through treacherous waters).

Among Ahab’s other faults are a tendency to boast about his abilities and an eye for the ladies. Ahab will rarely admit he can’t do something, no matter what it is, which can result in trouble if someone assumes he can do something he can’t and depends on him for it. Or it may cause someone to underestimate the old salt when his wild claim is, in actuality, no boast at all. Ahab considers himself a bit of a ladies man and will attempt to ingratiate himself with any female Investigators in the party, calling them “sweetie” and otherwise flirting shamelessly. He truly can’t understand it when they reject him, though he’s good natured about it all, philosophically believing they’ll “come around” eventually. And if it comes to a point where any woman needs Ahab to perform some crucial duty, he’ll often pointedly remind her of his “availability” before performing it. (Any lady who accepts Ahab’s advances, however, will find him surprisingly gentle, noble, and loving—the perfect gentleman, if not exactly a Knight in Shining Armor).

In spite of his love for “booze, brawling, and broads—not necessarily in that order,” Ahab is a good companion to have on one’s side. Once he gives his loyalty to someone, he’ll go through Hell and high water for that person or persons, as long as they deal fairly with him. Along with his nautical skills, Ahab is a fair shot, an expert brawler, and a jack-of-all-trades. His resourcefulness can be amazing to anyone who takes him at surface appearances. He keeps several cases of dynamite, along with an old Lewis Light Machine Gun (and a mount and plenty of ammo), in his hold. And he will break them out without hesitation if convinced of the need for heavy firepower.

Ahab is also a font of sea lore and legend, having spent several years in the South Seas. His small Cthulhu Mythos knowledge is the result of several visits to Ponape in his youth and a chance reading of the *Cthaat Aquadingen* on a charter trip to Easter Island some years back. (He may also have had a run-in with the Mythos in London a few decades back—see the notes at the end.) Ahab managed to learn the Gate spell from this, but will use it—or even reveal his knowledge of it—only in extreme emergencies. (The lady who owned the book—an amateur witch who succumbed to the old salt’s charms—told him use of the spell would soon make him impotent.) Although not overly superstitious—a



rarity in his occupation—Ahab has seen and heard enough to have an open mind on matters of the occult. And with enough of his Ahab’s Folly under his belt, he’ll face anything, although relatively cautiously and with the proper amount of respect.

Ahab may be encountered accepting charter’s anywhere along the coasts or navigable rivers of North and South America (or England, if that’s where the campaign originates. For the right amount, however, he’ll go anywhere his boat can sail. (He’s sailed the 7 seas and most navigable rivers of the world in his time.) Investigators needing sea transportation will find Ahab’s terms the most reasonable around—even for slightly “extra-legal” purposes. Though he’ll always insist an Investigator drink on any deal—with his special brew. (Anyone who can hold it may even get a better deal.) Ahab’s services have often been hired for minor Miskatonic U. expeditions in the Western Hemisphere or the South Seas—his reputation as a seaman is firm, in spite of his eccentricities.

A clever Keeper can use Ahab as a gadfly to liven up otherwise routine voyages and encounters. (Ahab can turn even the most ordinary of these into a full-fledged brouhaha!) He can also be a strong ally in adverse situations, if necessary, and his value as such should be balanced with his potential for getting the Investigators into trouble.



Captain Sinbad Ahab, Age 70, Sailor

STR 16 CON 18 SIZ 12 INT 12 POW 17 DEX 14 APP 9 EDU 12 SAN 65 HP 15

Skills: Astronomy (Navigational) 65%; Biology (Marine) 40%; Boating 80%; Bribery 55%; Climb 60%; Communications 65%; Cthulhu Mythos 5%; Diving 35%; Dodge 50%; Fast Talk 65%; First Aid 40%; Gambling 60%; Jump 55%; Listen 65%;

Maritime Law 55%; Mechanical Repair 65%; Navigation 75%, Observation 35%; Oceanology 45%; Occult 40%; Other Language: Dutch 25%; Other Language: French 35%; Other Language (Portuguese) 60%; Other Language (Spanish) 70%; Pilot Boat 85%; Psychology 45%; Sailing 75%; Sea Lore 75%; Shiphandling 85%; Sign Language 50%; Spot Hidden 50%; Streetwise 45%; Swim 80%.

Weapons: Fist 75%, 1D3+1D4; Kick 50%, 1D6+1D4; Head Butt 40%, 1D4+1D4; Grapple 60%; Club 65%, 1D8+1D4; Fighting knife 50%, 1D4+2+1D4; .45 Revolver 45%, 1D10+2; 12g. Sawed-off shotgun 55%, 4D6, 2D6, 1D6; Lewis MG 45%, 2D6+3/bullet in a burst.

Spells: Gate (Has never used it and will do so only in life or death situations—and only on an Idea roll suggesting it’s his only hope for survival—because he thinks it’ll make him impotent.) **Optional:** Starstone of Mnar (He had one in the 1890s; whether he still possesses it is up to the Keeper. He may also have a Fire Vampire Charm, again at the discretion of the Keeper, which he considers just a good luck charm.)

Personal Equipment: Flask of booze; Bowie knife; Blackjack; .45 Revolver and 10 reloads; 12g Sawed-off shotgun and 10 reloads; Lewis light machine gun and five 47-round mags (on his boat); Two 50-stick crates of dynamite (on his boat); Motorized sailing sloop (or river boat, depending on need); 1D3 x \$100 ready cash. (Additional nautical and/or sailing equipment as needed.)

Notes: Ahab is getting long in the tooth, but at 70, he still looks much as he did in his 50s—and he’s still tough as nails.

Other Eras: This version of Ahab was designed for 1920s adventures, but because of his age, the old salt will fit right into any 1890s campaign with ease. (Just trade the Lewis MG for a Maxim, Gatling, Nordenfelt, or similar period weapon—although it’ll be usable only when mounted and may be restricted to Ahab’s boat.) In fact, a slightly different version of Ahab appears in this author’s M.U. monograph *Return of the Ripper*. In that adventure, Ahab is in his ’50s—about a decade too old to be only in his ’70s in the 1920s, but the Keeper can easily adjust his age down into his ’40s in 1893 or up into his ’80s in the 1920s, should such continuity seem

desirable. (Keepers running campaigns in both eras could introduce his players to the same NPC at different ages, which could prove amusing, even if the actual Investigators of the two eras aren't the same.) Differences in characteristics between the two versions can be attributed to the effects of aging. (Although his CON has improved—why could be a mystery to explore for anyone who knows him in both eras.) Differences in skill levels can be attributed to an extra 30 years of experience.

Ahab is just as workable in the present day—one of those old sailors who never seem to die and who live quite nicely on the fringes of society. A modern-day version of Ahab must be a different person, however, as it's unlikely the old salt would have lived to the ripe old age of 150. (If he did, that's *really* a mystery to explore, especially if players running modern Investigators have run afoul of the sailor in 1890s or 1920s campaigns as well.) This Ahab could be an ancestor of the original (who is likely to have sewn his wild oats across several continents and seas)—either a great-grandson or a distant nephew. (Ahab was actually created for a scenario of another game set in the far future, so fitting him into the present shouldn't be a task at all.)

ALTAMONT, BRITISH SECRET AGENT

Altamont (his code name) is a special, detached agent for the British Secret Service, called in only on the most unusual or baffling of cases that threaten the security of England—or those in which his “special abilities” would prove of particular use. An elderly, white-haired gentleman in his '70s (though much younger in appearance), his gentle, civilized demeanor hides a man of decisive action and unusual intelligence. If he chooses to show it, his eyes betray the sharp, burning intellect of a genius behind his aging, hawklike countenance. His whip-slender limbs still retain a strength that would be amazing in a man even half his age, and his still-rugged constitution can yet allow him to devote days on end to the pursuit of a mission, with a minimum of sleep or sustenance (though nowhere near as much as in his youth).

In his younger days, Altamont engaged himself in amateur detective work, often hiring his services as a consultant or even operating as a private detective himself. He thus developed his investigative talents—and especially his powers of observation and deduction—to a high degree. Those skills, coupled

with an intimate knowledge of the criminal society of London and elsewhere—as well as an eclectic, almost encyclopedic knowledge of a wide variety of subjects he deemed helpful in this chosen pursuits—have prompted many younger British agents who've worked with Altamont to dub him “a regular Sherlock Holmes”—a comparison the older man seems to disdain.

Among his other talents, Altamont is quite accomplished at disguise and mimicry—if he'd been of a different bent of mind, he could have been a very successful actor. His advancing age has limited somewhat his choices of disguises and characters, but he can still accomplish almost uncanny changes of appearance and personality with a minimum of materials. His favorite guises are those of a wild-eyed, white-bearded, senile old gent, and an even older, withered old lady. His normal appearance, that in which he appears to his superiors and fellow agents as Altamont himself, is that of a van-dyked, country gentleman (although even this may be a disguise and not his real appearance when he's not on a mission for King and Country).

Altamont is also a skilled tracker and tailer—the Keeper should halve any Spot Hidden or similar detection rolls by characters whom Altamont is following, and even then, he should allow such a roll only if they are actively looking for a tail or Altamont misses his Sneak or Hide roll. Even then, unless the detection roll is one-fifth of the characters' normal percentage, all they'll get is the vague impression that someone is following them—or maybe catch a quick glimpse of a shadow moving out of sight. (If they attempt to follow-up on this, no one will be found.)

Although he's not as spry as he used to be, Altamont is still a very good hand-to-hand combatant as well as a skilled swordsman, although even at his peak he was only average with a handgun (and slightly better with a rifle). He'll carry a Webley .45 revolver if he knows he'll be in a life-threatening situation and a Lee-Enfield rifle if in the wilds, but Altamont prefers to use a weighted stick, a sword cane, or his fists in combat.

Though not a confirmed believer in the supernatural or the occult, Altamont nevertheless has a fair amount of knowledge on the subject, as well as some experience—including some Cthulhu Mythos knowledge picked up on some of the more outré cases he worked during his earlier detective and latter espionage careers. He also spent several years

during middle age traveling in the Near and Far East—particularly Saudi Arabia, Nepal, Tibet, and Persia—where he heard native legends of such places as Leng, Kadeth, the Plateau of Tsang, and Iren, City Of Pillars, and where he read some of the forbidden texts hidden away in Tibetan Lamaseries. Thus he is aware that more exists in heaven and earth than has been dreamt of in most people’s philosophies, and he is ready to combat such forces if it proves necessary.

A practical man, however, Altamont first looks for the more mundane causes behind a mission, even if they’re well hidden, before turning to less-likely agents of effect. Investigators who wish to enlist Altamont’s aid in opposing supernatural or Mythos forces had better be prepared to offer hard proof or display hard-earned knowledge on the subject before he’ll act on their word alone. (Of course, if he’s already uncovered such evidence himself, and the Investigators’ request for assistance parallels the goals of whatever mission he’s on, they may find they’ll have trouble keeping up with Altamont themselves.)

Altamont may be encountered—most likely in disguise—should Investigators become involved in a particularly baffling or dangerous occult investigation in the British Isles or in some current or past possession of the British Empire. (India would be a likely location for the latter, as England and Russia—by now the Soviet Union—remain locked in their seemingly endless struggle for influence in the region, known as The Great Game.) This will especially be true if some subversive organization, cult, or secret society is involved (such as the Silver Twilight of Chaosium’s *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*, the Starry Wisdom, or perhaps even a revival of the dreaded Thuggee cult, worshippers of the blood-thirsty goddess Kali—no doubt an avatar of Shub-Niggurath).

Initially, Altamont will probably be surveying the area when encountered by the Investigators and will not reveal his true nature or purpose to them unless he’s certain they are trustworthy and capable as potential allies. Altamont will frequently work behind the scenes as much as possible, letting any fellow agent in the case make contact with them first, often contacting them at all himself only if the other agent is killed or lost or it’s otherwise necessary for him to drop his disguise and/or to demonstrate his true abilities in a rescue situation. (In spite of his profession and his usual, almost emotionless demeanor, Altamont is a humanist at heart and will

not stand by and see anyone killed or otherwise hurt if he can help it—unless, of course, the person deserves it.) It’s likely the agent, should direct contact be necessary, will approach the Investigators in one of his many disguises or alternate personas that he employs from time to time—perhaps as the renowned Norwegian explorer, Sigerson.

A Keeper can employ Altamont as a potential ally and confederate for a party of Investigators who prove their worth in extremely dangerous situations. He can provide backup or missed information (as he’ll usually have already collected almost all important data on a case himself), and he can extricate them in extreme cases where the Keeper deems such help appropriate—including a way out of an otherwise fatal situation by showing up at just the right moment. The Keeper must be careful not to *overuse* Altamont thusly, however, or the Investigators may come to overly rely on his aid. (If this happens, the Keeper should remove Altamont from the mainstream of the action, in a nonfatal way, as soon as possible—perhaps by being called off to an even more crucial mission.)

If Investigators do encounter Altamont early on in one of his disguises, he can even be used to misdirect them by his very presence and actions. (Who *is* that strange cackling old man, and why is he here?) Once he’s revealed himself for who and what he is on a case, however, Altamont will usually contact Investigators almost immediately upon encountering them on a future mission—as long as they proved worthy of his trust in the first operation and he feels he can depend on their assistance. Thus Altamont can be used to pull Investigators into a scenario they might otherwise have avoided—particularly if they owe him for helping them out previously.

Altamont’s wide range of skills are only touched on below—the Keeper may add to them as a scenario requires, especially if necessary to fill in a gap in knowledge in a certain area in which the Investigators or other NPCs are lacking. Although no spells are listed (except the one), a Keeper may, at his own discretion, add one or two low-level protection spells to Altamont’s bag of tricks, assuming that the agent has picked these up in especially outré cases in the recent past. Altamont’s extraordinarily high Luck score can be used to help him survive otherwise fatal situations—even if his death has appeared certain to the Investigators or their foes. (The man has more lives than a cat.)

Note that, except for any false names used in his disguises, Altamont—no first name offered—is the only moniker that the agent will ever give the Investigators. No one except the mysterious M, head of the British Secret Service (who happens to be Altamont's older brother), knows his real name or identity—not even his fellow agents, to whom he's something of a legend. And to preserve his peaceful life between missions, that is how Altamont intends to keep it.



Altamont, Age 70, British Secret Agent

STR 17 CON 18 SIZ 18 INT 19 POW 18 DEX 16 APP 9 EDU 18 SAN 94 HP 17

Skills: Acting 95%; Anthropology 45%; Archaeology 50%; Art (Violin) 85%; Art (Musicology) 65%; Bargain 55%; Biology (Botany, esp. poisons) 75%; Biology (Zoology) 70%; Bribery 70%; Chemistry 85%; Climb 75%; Conceal 75%; Credit Rating 50%; Craft (Beekeeping) 65%; Criminology 90%; Cryptography 85%; Cthulhu Mythos 15%; Disguise 95%; Dodge 75%; Drive Carriage 65%; Fast Talk 95%; First Aid 55%; Geology (London) 85%; Hide 85%; History 65%; History (Art) 75%; History (Criminal) 80%; Interrogation 75%; Jump 65%; Law 90%; Library Use 85%; Linguistics 45%; Listen 85%; Literature (Criminal) 90%; Locksmith 85%; Martial Arts (Baritsu) 80%; Mechanical Repair 30%; Medicine 35%; Mountaineering 55%; Navigation 65%; Observation/Deduction 95%; Occult 55%; Other Language: Cornish 25%; Other Language: Criminal Slang 85%; Other Language: French 90%; Other Language: German 65%; Other Language: Greek 75%; Other Language: Latin 75%; Other Language: Phoenician/Chaldee 25%; Other Language: Tibetan 45%; Persuade (Debate) 85%; Persuade (Oratory) 70%; Pharmacy 75%; Pickpocket

65%; Psychology 95%; Ride 55%; Safecracking 45%; Sneak 85%; Spot Hidden 95%; Streetwise (London) 95%; Survival (Desert) 45%; Survival (Moors) 70%; Survival (Mountains) 65%; Swim 75%; Tail 85%; Throw 75%; Track 85%; Trivia (Tobacco Ashes) 85%.

Weapons: Fist 85%, 1D3+1D4; Kick 75%, 1D6+1D4; Sword-cane 80%, 1D6+1D4; Singlestick (as Club) 75%, 1D8+1D4; .45 Webley Revolver 25%, 1D10+2 damage; .303 Lee-Enfield Rifle 60%, 2D6+4.

Mental Disorders: Manic-Depressive (*Very mild*—manic state helps him keep going during a mission, and depressive state—manifested as ennui, lethargy, and a seeming lack of energy—kicks in only when he's not currently involved with a case.); Obsession (seeing justice done)

Spells: Tongues (*Note:* This spell can give him fluency in all necessary languages—but he doesn't need to spend more than a few minutes listening to pick it up. After doing so, make a Linguistics roll; if successful, Altamont has full fluency—90%—in the language. If the roll is missed, he gains only his Linguistics percentage in that language, but may try again the next day at twice his Linguistics skill percentage—and so on until he picks up the language fluently. Altamont does not, however, consider this a spell—he believes it merely to be a mental discipline he learned in Tibet years earlier.)

Personal Equipment: Sword-cane, weighted riding crop (as singlestick), .45 Webley Revolver and 10 reloads, .303 Lee-Enfield Rifle and 10 magazines, Disguise kit, Stradivarius Violin and sturdy case, Magnifying glass, Clay pipe and five pouches of shag tobacco, Lockpick kit and skeleton keys, and any other specialized equipment as needed.

Notes: In the countryside, except in warm climes, Altamont takes pleasure in wearing an old deerstalker cap and Inverness cape, both of which have seen better days. In the city, however, he wears an ordinary suit and coat and, occasionally, a cloth cap for outdoors. In warmer and colder parts of the Empire, he dresses according to the weather—and whatever mission he's on. He keeps his violin—a priceless Stradivarius—close but plays it only when he's in a melancholy mood or needs to clear his

mind. He has a hidden compartment in the reinforced case, in which he keeps communiqués from M and other items of importance to him. (One of these appears to be an old, faded wedding invitation from someone named “Watson.”) When he’s temporarily stumped on a mission, Altamont stays up all night smoking his pipe and meditating on the problem. He calls one that’s particularly perplexing a “three-pipe” problem, as that’s usually how long it takes him to solve it.

Other Eras: Altamont, as described here, is a 1920s character. Using him in the 1890s or today is difficult, although a creative Keeper could find a way to do so. The agent did not adopt the code name Altamont until the years just before the Great War—in fact, he wasn’t even an agent for the British Secret Service until then, except informally on occasions when his services as a detective were called upon by the government (usually in the form of his older brother) or when he was traveling to areas of special interest to the British government—the Sudan (site of the Mahdist revolt of 1884-98), India (where Britain played out the Great Game with Imperial Russia), and Tibet in particular.

1890s Investigators may encounter Altamont under other aliases during this period, especially from 1891-94, when he traveled through Montenegro, the Middle East (Saudi Arabia and Sudan in particular), India, Nepal, and Tibet, and, finally, Montpellier, in France. If encountered in Nepal or Tibet, he will be going under the alias of Sigerson, a Norwegian explorer, and will give no other name. In other countries during that period (and in England during the remainder of the 1890s), he may use a variety of aliases; the Keeper may choose these as he wishes (including the agent’s *real* name, if an astute Keeper’s deduced it by now). Sigerson (and other personas) look the same as Altamont is described, except the hair is darker, the goatee is gone, and he appears much younger, of course, than he will in the ’20s.

Moving Altamont to the present day is possible—but if the Keeper chooses this course, the agent is actually the same man that he was in the ’20s. Altamont’s lifespan has been extended through the intake of royal jelly, a byproduct of his beekeeping. (He took up the hobby on retirement to the Sussex Downs, in South England, in 1903, and he continued to tend to it as he could in and around his work as a British agent. The effects of the jelly are what makes him seem much younger than his actual age in the 1920s.) This should not be a problem unless overly

suspicious Investigators somehow manage to discover records of Altamont earlier in the century and discover that’s he not changed at all since then. (This would be difficult; unlike James Bond, Altamont kept a low profile, and the British Secret Service did a good job of covering up his exploits—rolls against Library Use, Computer Use, or other investigative skills should be halved at best in attempting to uncover information on the agent.) If that happens, they may draw the wrong conclusion and think that Altamont is some kind of immortal sorcerer—even an agent of the Mythos! Such an erroneous deduction could have most disastrous consequences . . .

KYLE T. OATES

Kyle T. Oates epitomizes the typical eccentric (read “mad”) scientist/inventor/gadgeteer of the ’20s and ’30s—wild-haired, wild-eyed, and wearing a stained lab coat with a well-worn slide rule sticking out of his pocket. A self-taught genius, Oates loves gadgets of all kinds and is always tinkering with them. (He sometimes tinkers so much that he forgets what kind of gadget he was working on in the first place, resulting in a number of Rube Goldberg-looking contraptions strewn throughout his garage-like house and the surrounding yard.) Among his inventions are a particularly sensitive (and unusually bulky) spectroscope, which he’s fixed to a homemade telescope that juts out of a hole he cut in his roof. He’s also cobbled together a mechanical computing machine from an old Babbage difference engine he found in a junkyard, as well as a “secret weapon” that hardly ever works (see below).

Oates not only looks like something out of a pulp magazine, he loves to read the pulps as well—especially lurid scienti-fiction and cosmic horror. (H.P. Lovecraft is one of his favorite authors . . .) He avidly devours the pulps, just as he does the countless scientific and engineering journals that lie in piles around his house. Oates is used to being considered a crackpot, so he no longer fears what people may think of his theories—although he still gets frustrated when people fail to listen and dismiss him as a fruitcake.

If anyone is willing to listen and *not* dismiss him as a nut job, Oates will open up to that person, perhaps letting him look through his spectroscope or showing him one of his other inventions. Oates will be just a little more reluctant to discuss what he’s

seen through his telescope: flying lobster-like creatures winging through space from the outer solar system. But if anyone gains his confidence, he'll gladly elaborate on that as well and offer to let them look for the creatures through his telescope. (At the Keeper's discretion, Oates' story can be true, and he's actually seen the Mi-Go in space; the Fungi can be observed only through Oates' telescope as they fly around a new comet coming into the inner solar system, where they are mining a rare mineral from its core. Or Oates can simply be delusional, having gotten wrapped up in a pulp story from a magazine that he reads over and over again, so he now believes its tale of lobster men from Neptune is true.)

Oates lives and works in a makeshift lab that he's built in his home on the outskirts of the city. (What city is unimportant—it's whichever one your Investigators are in for the scenario in which you introduce Oates.) It resembles nothing so much as an old ramshackle garage added onto with little rhyme or reason. To complicate matters, the front, side, and back yards are strewn with half-finished, cannibalized, and discarded inventions, the purposes of which are indecipherable to most people. (It takes 10% of a Mechanical Repair roll to figure out what any of them are—and the Keeper should use his imagination if anyone succeeds in a roll). Fortunately for Oates' neighbors, a tall fence surrounds the property, shielding the eyesore from view. A Keep-Out sign hangs on the front gates, but they are unlocked and anyone can gain entrance (although few would want to). Making one's way through the debris-strewn yard requires a roll of DEX x 4% to avoid tripping on the mechanical detritus. (If anyone falls, a Luck roll is required to avoid taking 1D3 damage from the ragged edges of the orphaned machinery.)

Investigators may hear about Oates from almost anyone in the local scientific community—most will dismiss him as a crackpot, however, but will add “. . . always coming up with some weird new invention he says will save mankind or revolutionize the world.” After they've heard Oates' name bandied about enough, they may decide to check him out if they have any kind of problem that would require an inventor or someone who thinks outside the box. They may also run across his name in a local newspaper article—one of those “It's Silly Season” pieces designed to ridicule its subject and give the paper's readers a few laughs. (It may be a piece on his claims to have seen “Winged Lobster Men” flying

around a new comet coming into the inner solar system.) In any event, it'll dismiss him as a crackpot. If Investigators decide to pay a visit to Oates for any reason, they can find him listed in the local phone directory or newspaper morgue or from any number of other sources on a successful Library Use roll.

Investigators who make their way safely to the front door of Oates' home get no answer if they knock on it; a buzzer at the side of the door makes no noise but delivers an electrical shock to anyone who presses it. (Unless the presser misses a CON x 5% roll, no damage results. A missed roll gives 1 point of damage.) Knocking on the door causes it to swing open into a dimly lit “living” room, strewn with more mechanic parts and discarded machines of unperceivable purpose. (Mechanical or Electrical Repair roll will discern that they are operable). Also piled in waist-high stacks and strewn everywhere across the floor are scientific and engineering journals, mixed liberally with what appear to be pulp magazines. (A small bookshelf on one wall contains more of the same, as well as tattered volumes by Jules Verne and H.G. Wells.) If anyone examines the magazines, they contain cheap scienti-fiction novellas with lurid covers of robots and aliens attacking barely dressed women (for the '20s). The journals cover a wide range of scientific and engineering topics, but the details would be evident only to Investigators with the pertinent skills.

If someone wants to investigate the room more thoroughly, a Spot Hidden roll will reveal one of the pulp magazines lying open on a dingy armchair (the only recognizable piece of furniture in the room). On the cover is a picture of a bat-winged lobster walking upright and holding a ray gun in its claws. A banner under the picture reads, “Face the Indescribable Horror of . . . LOBSTER MEN FROM NEPTUNE!!!” If the finder further examines the magazine, he'll find that the cover story is quite worn; smudgy fingerprints mark most of its dog-eared pages, and unreadable notes are scribbled in the margins, underlined several times and sporting numerous exclamation marks. An Idea roll will bring the Investigator to the conclusion that this story holds some kind of special meaning for Oates. A second Spot Hidden roll (or one by a second Investigator) will find a letter lying on the floor, addressed to Oates and signed by inventor Nikola Tesla; if he reads it and makes a successful English roll, much of it will still go over his head, but he can

glean the fact that Tesla and Oates have been corresponding for some time and hold a mutual respect for one another.

If the Investigators linger in the front room for any length of time, they'll be surprised by a wild-haired, goggled Oates emerging from the door at the back of the room. He is carrying a welding torch in his hands, its hose dragging behind him into the adjacent room. (If they don't tarry but go directly into the next room, they'll see Oates bending over yet another mechanical device, welding a plate on it.) Oates will be surprised to see them—if they'd called out when they entered the house, he was concentrating too much on the job at hand to have heard them. He'll ask angrily who they are and wave the torch at them if they fail to answer soon enough, telling them to leave. They will need to either Fast Talk or Persuade the inventor to let them stay and hear them out. (One tact would be to tell him that they are here to interview him. Doing so adds +10% to Fast Talk or Persuade skill. As long as they emphasize that they are from a reputable paper and seem to honestly care to hear what Oates has to say, he will grant them an interview.)

If Oates reacts favorably to the Investigators, he will take them into his inner lab (a smaller room beyond the first) to show them some of the wonders he's been working on. There they will see a huge tarp-covered telescope sticking through a rough-cut hole in the ceiling; Oates has obviously cobbled the telescope together by cannibalizing other devices. Another bulky device that appears attached to the telescope Oates declares to be a special spectroscope he's built. He'll also show them the mechanical computing machine he's built from an old Babbage difference engine. He tells them that it's more efficient than the most accurate slide rule. He adds that he used it to calculate the effects a new comet he's been observing will have when Earth passes through its tail and when they will spell the world's doom. (If they ask for a demonstration, it will clatter, rattle, hum, and then do nothing. Oates will kick it, and tell them he needs to tinker with it a bit more.)

Oates will also regale them, once he's comfortable doing so, of his stories of having observed through his telescope winged lobster men flying through the aether of space from unknown worlds at the far rim of our solar system. (If they've seen the pulp magazine about the lobster men, they may conclude that he's gone off the deep end and is imagining a pulp story to be real. If not, and someone can make a Cthulhu Mythos roll, they may believe that he's seen the Mi-

Go with his viewing device.) Oates will also warmly describe his correspondence and friendship with the famed inventor Nikola Tesla; he'll confide to them that, someday, his name will be as well known as Tesla's and "that . . . er, Edison fellow—what's his full name?"

If the Investigators and Oates hit it off, he'll appear pensive just as they're leaving and then suddenly ask them if they want to see his secret invention—something he's not shown anyone yet. If they decline the honor, he'll seem miffed, but will invite them back again when they have more time. If they accept the offer, he'll take them to yet another back room, one bare except for a tarp-covered device in the center and a slab of metal standing up at another end. The metal slab appears to have burn marks in the center, surrounding a small hole. He'll proudly pull the tarp off to reveal what looks like some kind of futuristic ray gun projector, cables running from it back into the other room. He'll tell them that he got the idea from Tesla, but that this baby is all his—it'll revolutionize warfare. He'll offer a demonstration, if they'd like, and will promptly turn on the weapon. It will emit a rising hum as it appears to charge up, vacuum tubes glowing. Oates will aim it at the metal slab, tell them not to look directly at the beam, and pull the trigger . . . but nothing happens. The hum will die down, the tubes darken, and the machine will become inert. Oates, in frustration, will kick it, and it will seem to hum to life again. But then it dies for good. He'll cover it up and smile, saying "Ah, well—back to the drawing board. Another time, perhaps?"

If the Investigators fail to hit it off with Oates, he'll chase them off with his welding torch and tell them not to come back—he doesn't need any more harassment from small minds. He'll come across as not only a total loony, but a deranged one at that. Oates is likely to receive them with better graces, however, if the Investigators return at a different time or send other Investigators. (If they're returning at his invitation to view the new comet or the lobster men through his telescope, however, he'll of course welcome them back. And if they seem at all interested, but it's light outside when they are there, Oates will certainly invite them to return that night for a viewing.)

Keeper's Note: Oates' ray gun is unlikely ever to actually work. And even if he did get it in shape, he'd have to haul it and a (huge) portable generator in his pickup to wherever the Investigators needed it.

And maybe even then he'd need to rig it up to local power lines to get enough juice to fire it up. If the Investigators are in a real pickle, however, and Oates' weapon is their Last Best Hope to Save the World, the Keeper may allow it to come into play as a last resort; if so, simply treat it for game purposes as one of the alien weapons listed in the *CoC* rulebook—either the Mi-Go Electric Gun or the Yithian Lightning Gun would be appropriate. (Or, if you have the *Keeper's Companion 2*, feel free to substitute any of the alien weapons in that book—the Mi-Go Whorl Gun, for example—for either of these weapons in simulating Oates' death ray gun. Or just see below.)

Along with all the various devices at his lab, and a .22 rifle that he sometimes uses to shoot rats in the yard, Oates can probably repair or cobble together any number of helpful gadgets for the Investigators, given sufficient time and materials. He also has an old beat-up pickup truck out back at his home for any heavy hauling that may be necessary. He's unlikely to leave his lab, however, unless there's a real necessity to test one of his inventions in the field.



Kyle T. Oates, age 36, Engineer/Inventor

STR 11 CON 10 SIZ 11 INT 16 POW 12 DEX 12
APP 11 EDU 14 SAN 60 HP 11

Skills: Accounting 35%; Astronomy 55%; Bargain 20%; Chemistry 45%; Computing Machine (Mechanical) 65%; Craft (Spectroscopy) 55%; Cthulhu Mythos 01%; Dodge 35%; Electrical Repair 75%; Engineering 75%; Explosives 45%; Invent 85%; Library Use 45%; Listen 40%; Literature (Pulps) 65%; Mathematics 65%; Mechanical Repair 65%; Navigate 20%; Occult 15%; Operate Heavy Machinery 45%; Photography 25%; Physics 70%; Psychology 20%; Sneak 35%; Spot Hidden 30%; Swim 40%; Throw 30%.

Weapons: .22 Rifle 35%, 1D6+2; Ray gun 45%, 2D10+3 (and roll damage vs. CON to avoid death).

Personal Equipment: As described above for his lab/home, plus whatever other gizmos the Keeper deems appropriate for him to cobble together.

Notes: Oates can be played strictly for fun—he may actually be just a harmless crackpot—or he can be used to help the Investigators in situations where some kind of unorthodox gadget may be just what they need to turn the tide against the Mythos.

Oates originally appeared in the monograph *Menace from the Moon*, based in San Diego in 1929. You can find additional information about the inventor there. The comet that he's observing, which the Mi-Go are mining, is the core of the destroyed fifth planet, original home of the Moon Creatures (see page 59). Oates has viewed the unusual radiation the comet (dubbed Comet Negretto, after its discoverer) is emitting through his special spectroscope attached to his telescope, and he believes that it will spell doom to the Earth when our planet passes through its tail (although he's unaware of the Moon Creatures). If the moon rocks that hold the creatures are viewed through his spectroscope, Oates (and anyone who's observed the comet through his equipment) can see that the faint radiation the rocks are emitting is identical to that of the comet. What this signifies, however, may not be clear until the comet draws closer. (See *Menace from the Moon* for details.)

Other Eras: Oates can easily be transplanted into the 1890s—eccentric inventors were just as popular then as in the 1920s. Even today, his type of character could work, although he'd generally be even more shunned by the scientific establishment than in the earlier periods. (He may even be currently incarcerated in a local mental asylum and would be extremely grateful to any Investigators who manage to spring him from that wretched state. His entire lab and all his inventions, whether working or otherwise, would be at their disposal.) Today, Oates, of course, wouldn't personally know Tesla, who's been dead since the 1940s, but Tesla would no doubt be Oates' hero—the man he most wants to emulate.

A modern-day Oates would have slightly different skills and equipment. Instead of the Computing Machine skill, he'd have Computer Use at the same percentage. He'd also have Electronics 75%. Instead of the Babbage engine, he'd be using an old Atari PC that he's souped up so that it's much more powerful than it looks. (He hates to throw out

perfectly good equipment, as should be obvious from the state of his home and lab, so just keeps upgrading it rather than getting something new—just part of his eccentricity.) Instead of the slide rule in his pocket, he

carries a battered pocket calculator. (Or maybe he still uses the slide rule for the same reason that he keeps the Atari. If so, it likely has bits of other items glued to it where Oates “customized” it.)



Mythos Lesson #5: Never play hide and seek with a Deep One—they cheat!



“Hey, say that to our faces!”

PSYCHIC VAMPIRES IN CALL OF CTHULHU

*As if ordinary vampires aren't bad enough, here's one
Who wants to drink your soul rather than your blood!*

In *Call of Cthulhu*, a *psychic vampire* is, simply put, a creature that must feed off the life energy and fear of other beings to continue to exist. While some who delve too deeply into the mystical arts may themselves become psychic vampires—and, indeed, there may be individuals who are simply born that way via a quirk of nature—most psychic vampires encounter in a *CoC* campaign will have been created through use of a spell that tortures and twists the individual into a life-draining monster. The Tcho-Tchos of Southeast Asia are known to possess such a spell—and have often used it on hapless victims who've stumbled into their territory. Following days, even weeks, of torture, the spell is cast on the Tcho-Tchos' victim, transforming him into an unnatural . . . *thing* . . . no longer completely human, yet able to pass as one . . . as long as he feeds off the life force of others, especially those in the throes of extreme fear.

Ironically, once a victim has been transformed, the Tcho-Tchos set him free. Now hopelessly and evilly insane, the new psychic vampire serves as the Tcho-Tchos' weapon against the hated Westerners who have for so many years encroached on their domains. He returns to his home and, under the cloak of darkness, begins to hunt down his victims and to feed upon their fear. Sometimes the Tcho-Tchos even provide the fledgling psychic vampire with a "companion," a fell creature that he can take back with him to the West and that will aid him in creating abject fear in his victims—all the more so that he can drink in its glorious essence. This "companion" may be a Mythos creature—most often a Dimensional Shambler—that they bind to their new creation, using a special variation of the Binding spell. Other times, it may be a semi-natural beast, such as the dread Giant Rats of Sumatra, bred by the Tcho-Tchos as man-killers.

Following is a description of the foul spell that the Tcho-Tchos use against their foes and the creature that results from it:

CREATE PSYCHIC VAMPIRE: This spell transforms a normal human being into a psychic

vampire—a creature that, while remaining nominally human (at least in appearance), must drain POW from others to live. To create a psychic vampire with this spell costs 50 MPs, 8 points of permanent POW, and 1D6 SAN. It requires a special ritual lasting 12 hours from start to finish, during which time the victim must be completely immobilized (by being tied down, etc.) and drugged or semi-conscious. It is traditional, at least among the Tcho-Tchos, that the victim be slowly tortured for a week or more prior to the actual ritual, to aid in breaking down his resistance and sanity. At the end of the ritual, the caster must overcome the victim's POW with his own on the Resistance table for the spell to succeed. If he fails, the victim dies, and all MPs and POW placed into the ritual are lost.

If the ritual is interrupted before completion, there is a chance equal to its degree of completion, determined by the Keeper, that it can be resumed after the interruption. (If the ritual is half complete, for example, the chance it can be resumed is 50%.) If the ceremony is more than half complete when interrupted, the caster may attempt a roll of POW x 3%, expending the MPs and POW and making the POW vs. POW roll to try to finish the process early. If successful, the victim is transformed; if not, he dies. If an interrupted ritual is not resumed within 12 hours, it must start anew. If the ritual isn't resumed within that 12-hour period, however, one month must pass before another attempt can be made to convert the same victim into a psychic vampire. Any attempt made prior to this waiting period results in the victim's death. Upon completion of the ritual, the victim becomes a psychic vampire and loses 1D100 points of SAN—on top of any SAN losses from the preliminary torture.

The Psychic Vampire

A psychic vampire loses 1 point of POW *each day* he is at all active. This POW loss continues until it is replaced by use of the Psychic Drain spell or the vampire's POW reaches 0. If POW does reach 0, the psychic vampire dies at the end of the day on which it reaches that level, unless the creature manages to



drain at least 1 point of POW from a victim first. POW loss may be retarded if the vampire lies in a dormant, deathlike state, engaging in no activity at all, barely even breathing. (Finding a psychic vampire in this state requires a Spot Hidden roll to detect his breathing and a Listen roll, with head at chest, to detect a heartbeat.) The vampire will still lose POW at the rate of 1 point per two weeks that it remains in this state, and any activity at all during this period—even raising an arm or speaking—negates the effects of the dormancy and causes a POW loss for that day (in addition to any from the time already dormant).

Being transformed into a psychic vampire has a few dubious benefits: Any and all wounds, sickness, or weakness from which the victim is suffering are completely healed upon conversion; the victim gains 1D6 points to both STR and his CON and 1D6+1 to permanent POW (necessary because of the daily POW losses); he becomes especially resistant to damage, all nonenchanted weapons doing only half-damage to him; and he gains the ability to cast the Psychic Drain spell, though he must often be taught its use. (If not, there is a chance equal to the sum of his INT+EDU+half any Occult skill, as a percentage, that he will figure it out for himself.)

A psychic vampire also regenerates hit points at a rate of one-fifth his current POW per round (minimum 1 point/round) until hit points reach zero; then POW is lost at 1/minute until death or use of the Psychic Drain spell to regain POW (and, subsequently, hit points). Even if a psychic vampire appears dead, however, unless its body is completely destroyed (by fire, acid, and so on) or significant parts of it are removed (the head *and* all limbs), it will begin to regenerate almost immediately. It will automatically drain 1 point of POW at any time in the future that it is within 10 yards of someone who experiences extreme fear. As it lies dormant, it then begins to regenerate hit points at the rate of 1/hour. When it has regained its hit points, the psychic vampire may rise again. It then has 24 hours to drain POW enough to continue its unnatural existence.

Oddly, the POW loss of a psychic vampire does not seem to affect its magic point total; even as POW level drops, it retains the same amount of MPs, equal to its full POW total, until it uses them. Its MPs regenerate only to the level of its *current* POW, however, whatever that is at the time. Another odd side effect of the psychic vampire's feeding on the life force of others (as represented by POW)

through use of the Psychic Drain spell: The draining effect often depletes the victim not only of POW, but of a significant amount of blood as well. (This is because the life force of a person often is manifest within the blood.) The psychic vampire does not actually drink the blood of his victims; rather, it is converted back to life energy and absorbed by the creature. This could explain the truth behind persistent legends of blood-sucking vampires throughout the world. (And also explains a lack of blood around the bodies of a psychic vampire's victims, as well as the discovery that a great deal of blood seems to be missing from the victims' bodies—more than could be accounted for by any wounds alone.)

When a psychic vampire donates what would normally be permanent POW to a spell, doing so simply affects his *current* POW—he can regain it all through the Psychic Drain spell, just as if it were part of his daily loss. One oddity, even of a psychic vampire's unusual existence, is that with sufficient POW loss, the vampire's physical stature seems to shrivel, and he becomes shorter than when he's at full POW. If POW drains to less than 10 points, the psychic vampire shrinks by as much as 1D5 inches (and his SIZ drops accordingly by 1D2 points). Most psychic vampires are crafty enough to compensate for the loss of height, wearing platform shoes, employing exaggerated posture, and even wearing unusual or outlandish clothing to distract onlookers from any change in stature. The vampire may also employ theatrical (or other) makeup, especially when low on POW, as his face becomes almost cadaverous in appearance when POW is low, although it appears fuller at his maximum POW. When extremely low on POW, a psychic vampire can be a frightening thing to encounter—even if he is alone.

Additional Spells for the Discerning Psychic Vampire

Psychic vampires gain the ability to cast a particular spell that helps them to sustain their horrid lives. The Tcho-Tchos train their newly created monster in the use of this spell. Often, they teach their inhuman pupil other spells to help him spread terror among the hated Westerners. Here are four of those spells:

PSYCHIC DRAIN: This spell normally works only on a character in the grip of extreme fear, as brought on by a life-threatening experience—one in which death is certain. It allows the caster to drain 1D3 points of permanent POW from a victim each

round it is in effect. It requires no POW vs. POW or MP vs. MP rolls—only abject fear on the part of the victim. (Any NPC facing such horrors as a giant rat, a Dimensional Shambler, or any other Mythos creature—or who’s helpless in the face of certain death—is considered fearful for the purposes of this spell.) Investigators may avoid this state of fear by making a successful Idea roll and, when appropriate, a SAN roll. The Idea roll must be made once per round, but the SAN roll need be made only once, unless other SAN-blasting things appear.

Any missed roll indicates the Investigator’s nerve has failed, and he is prey to the spell’s effects until he can make a successful Idea roll again or the caster ends the spell—or is killed or knocked unconscious. Each point of damage done to a character attempting to resist this spell reduces his Idea roll on the round the damage occurs by 5%, cumulative till the spell ends. Any character faced with the object of a phobia is considered automatically in a state of fear. (Merciful Keepers may allow an INT x 1% roll for a phobia-ridden Investigator to avoid entering the necessary state of fear.) Characters must be conscious to experience the fear necessary for this spell to work on them.

Normally, this spell costs 20 MPs and 1 point of SAN to cast, but a psychic vampire need expend only 1 MP to cast it, as the Psychic Drain is required for its very existence. The spell remains in effect until ended by its caster. The points of POW drained from its victim may be added to the caster’s original (or raised) POW, but only up to its original total—points drained beyond that are lost. Thus if the caster’s original POW score was 20, and he’d lost 6 points of POW for whatever reason, he could drain 6 points of POW from a victim to raise his total back up to 20; if he drained 8 points of POW from the victim, the extra points would be lost. (**Optional:** The Keeper may allow extra POW points to be converted into magic points if the caster carries an enchanted object that acts as an MP battery.) When all the victim’s POW is finally drained, he or she dies.

The Psychic Drain spell can be learned only in certain Mythos books of Eastern origin, such as the *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan* or the *Ponape Scripture* or *Zanthu Tablets* (although it may also appear in certain grimoires copied from these books). It may also be learned from a priest of the Tcho-Tchos—should one be so inclined. Psychic vampires gain the spell as an ability resulting from

their conversion, but often must have its operation explained to them by the converter.

SUSTAIN LIFE: This spell enables a caster to keep a target alive and aware of what is happening to him regardless of any wounds inflicted, even to the point of normal death—i.e., when hit points reach 0—as long as the victim has POW left and the spell is in effect. The victim will still feel the pain of his wounds, although it’s muted somewhat by the spell to ward off the effects of shock. A victim can be completely ripped apart, his heart torn out, all the blood drained from his body, or be blasted to a burnt hulk—yet he will continue to be horribly aware of his fate, denied the escape of unconsciousness, shock, or even insanity, until the spell is ended or all the victim’s POW is removed. The victim cannot speak or make any sound while under the spell but remains utterly silent.

If the victim is still alive when the spell ends, he will immediately lose 1D10 SAN. A victim who is still physically alive when the spell ends (his hit point total is above 0), must roll CON x 5% or less or instantly go into shock, losing 1 hit point per hour until brought out of the state by a First Aid or Medicine skill roll or until dead. Those who live, but go insane as a result of the shocking wounds or mutilations inflicted, will invariably lapse into either catatonia or stupefaction, lasting the full period possible if the insanity is only temporary (a 15% chance).

The spell costs 10 MPs to cast and requires winning a MP vs. MP battle against a resisting subject. (MPs stored in a MP battery may be used for this purpose, to supplement one’s own MPs, but any so used will be expended.) An additional cost of 1 MP is required per minute the spell remains in effect. Casting the spell costs 1D3 SAN as well (plus any SAN loss from the sight of any mutilations inflicted on the victim—although most who would use the spell for that purpose have no SAN left to lose). Casting the Sustain Life spell takes only one round, and the spell takes effect on the next round.

The spell could potentially be used benevolently to keep an otherwise fatally wounded character alive until medical help can raise his hit points above 0, provided it is cast on the same round or the round immediately following that in which the character is “killed.” If medical assistance (First Aid, Medicine skill rolls, etc.) fails to raise hit points to at least 1, however, the character so sustained dies as soon as the spell ends. The Sustain Life spell *cannot* be used



to resurrect a character who's dead for more than one round. (And don't expect a psychic vampire to ever use the spell benevolently.)

SUMMON/BIND DIMENSIONAL SHAMBLER (SPECIAL): This is a variation on the normal Summon/Bind spells. It is known only to the Tcho-Tchos and certain very powerful wizards. The spell costs 30 magic points to set up, plus a human sacrifice and the expenditure of 4 permanent points of POW. A full day of chanting and preparation also is required. The spell permanently binds the creature summoned to any being the caster designates. The person to whom the creature is bound, therefore, need expend only 2 MPs, and the creature comes to him as soon as possible. For a Dimensional Shambler, that's nearly instantaneously (1 round if in its own dimensional plane, 2 if in ours). Once summoned, the creature will remain long enough to obey any orders of the summoner, at only 1 MP per order.

No additional rolls are required to summon or overcome the permanently bound creature—it will come and obey automatically. If left with no new orders, however, it will return to its place of origin within one minute of finishing its last task. A Shambler bound using this spell requires only 1 MP to summon if it's left in a location in our world. As distance in our world increases between the summoner and the Shambler, however, additional MPs are necessary to summon it—the cost doubling about every 2,000 miles.

BIND GIANT RAT: This is a variation on the Charm Animal spell that also acts as a Binding spell on this specific creature. By using this spell, one can control a Giant Rat for varying periods of time (up to 24 hours per use) and ensure that it remains bound to his service when he has need of it. It can be used to keep a Giant Rat in check on long voyages and to make it remain quiet should the need arise. MP costs and other aspects of the spell are the same as for the normal Charm Animal spell described in the *CoC* rulebook.

These last two spells are for use should the Tcho-Tchos send their psychic vampire a “companion” to aid in his reign of terror.

A Sample Psychic Vampire

Should you decide to employ a psychic vampire in your campaign, here's a ready-made NPC that you can use. This character was originally created and used in the M.U. monograph *Return of the Ripper*. In that 1890s adventure, he was also Jack the

Ripper. You need not use him in that capacity, however, especially if you run a 1920s or modern-day *CoC* campaign. (Although if you want to and do not intend to run that particular adventure, you can assume that that the same character who existed in the 1890s has unnaturally extended his life sufficiently to still be around many decades later.) For the purposes of this book, and in keeping with the 1920s theme for the other NPCs, I've converted his background info to conform to the 1920s. For additional information on this character as he appeared in the 1890s, see *Return of the Ripper*.



Sir John Danielson, Baronet and Psychic Vampire

Before his conversion into a psychic vampire by the abominable Tcho-Tcho people of Southeast Asia, Sir John Danielson was a typical young English aristocrat. He'd inherited his father's title at age 20, after the elder baronet was killed leading an infantry company at the Second Battle of the Marne, in the Great War. Sir Clive Danielson had gained the hereditary title on the accidental death of his older brother, who'd never married. Clive was the younger son of Sir Neville Danielson, who'd originally been awarded the baronetcy for his bravery and valiant action in the Boer War. Clive followed in his father's footsteps by joining the British Army on coming of age. He'd left the service on his brother's death in an automobile accident, only months after Sir Neville's passing, which gave him the title and the family estate just outside of the village of Barnet, immediately north of London. When British forces were engaged against the Germans on the Western Front, however, Sir Clive accepted a new commission. His subsequent death left Sir John as the “Baronet of Barnet” (as the locals had fondly called his father).

His mother's death from consumption the next year left Sir John without guidance, other than that of his

grand-uncle, an invalid since being wounded in South Africa and who'd lived at the manor in Barnet ever since. Sir John divided his time between the London social scene and visiting and "overseeing" the family's holdings in a Scottish coal mine in Sauchie, off the Firth of Forth. He became something of a ne'er do well—nothing bad or illegal; he just didn't seem interested in making anything of himself. Except for his interest in the mine—where he was fondly known by the workers as "Sauchie John"—he had no ambitions or goals in life, other than having a good time. So when the opportunity arose early in 1921 to visit the site of another Danielson holding—an interest in the Netherlands-Sumatra Company, headquartered on the East Indies isle of Sumatra—Sir John saw an excellent opportunity to relieve his boredom with everyday life as a London socialite. That was the baronet's fatal mistake.

In Sumatra, Sir John was captured by a tribe of Tcho-Tchos living on the island. (He'd insisted on joining a company hunting party.) These evil natives resented the intrusions Europeans had made into their existence—particularly those incursions of the Netherlands-Sumatra Company. The rest of his party was brutally killed by the Tcho-Tchos, but they saved Sir John for a worse fate. For days, the Tcho-Tchos tortured the young aristocrat. His torment culminated when the Tcho-Tchos performed an age-old ritual on the baronet, one that ended with the hapless Britisher forever transformed into a barely human creature—a psychic vampire.

Coincidentally, the ritual and the magical energies involved healed all his wounds and the depravations the Tcho-Tchos had inflicted on him, too. In fact, Danielson was in better physical condition than he'd been in a long time—stronger, more resistant to pain and damage, tougher. The catch was, although his own life energy had been boosted to higher levels than ever before, it wasn't a permanent state. Each day, the psychic vampire would lose a bit of that life energy, a loss that would continue until he was dead, his life force totally evaporated, or he replenished it—by draining it from another individual. Unfortunately, the amount of life energy that he could drain from another individual was limited—unless the victim was in the grip of extreme fear, the kind experienced when death was imminent. To continue to live, therefore, the hapless baronet now had to prey on others. And to do so, he had to bring them to a state of fear that would result in their own

deaths—yet they must be kept alive long enough so that he may feed off their life forces.

Normally, of course, Sir John would never think of acting in so hideous a manner, even if not doing so meant his own death. Unfortunately, his ordeal had driven the poor man quite mad—he was ready to do anything to sustain his now-unnatural existence. And the Tcho-Tchos were willing to oblige. Their plan was to send Danielson back to the Western world to feed off its inhabitants, paying the West back in some small, twisted manner for its unwanted invasion of the Tcho-Tchos' domain. First, they taught Danielson magical means by which he not only could drain the life force of a victim, but could also preserve and sustain the existence of that individual—in spite of physical damage that would normally prove fatal—at least until all the victim's life energy was drained. This would result in the victim's death, but only after Danielson had absorbed the lost life force completely.

Further, the Tcho-Tchos used an ancient technique known only to them to summon a Dimensional Shambler and bind it permanently to Danielson's control. Thus with the Shambler at his command, Danielson could use the creature to terrorize and, finally, kill his victims. Meanwhile, he used the methods the Tcho-Tchos taught him to keep the poor souls alive until he drained the last of their life forces. Sir John, as part of his education, had taken classes in anatomy at St. Bart's in London. And his now-twisted mind had thought of a way to utilize that knowledge to elicit the maximum possible terror from those who would become his prey.

As fully prepared for his new "life" as possible, Danielson made his way back to the relatively civilized area of the Netherlands-Sumatra Company's offices. He reported that he'd been separated from his party and wandered lost in the jungle until he'd stumbled onto the way back. Feigning horror to learn no one else had returned, he insisted that arrangements be made at once for his return to England. Unfortunately, it wasn't until he'd had to feed on a company worker that a ship became available for his return to England. As his life energy drained from him, Danielson felt himself seeming almost to shrivel physically—he found that he'd actually lost several inches of height! He'd feigned illness as a result of his ordeal, but he knew he'd have to feed before he left the island. Summoning the Shambler one night, he tested the creature's intelligence by ordering it to rip up a night watchman he'd spotted alone in the compound. It followed his



commands to the letter, and Danielson fed gloriously. The man's remains were left to be found later as the victim of "an animal attack."

Sir John Danielson, psychic vampire, then embarked on his return to England, to arrive home in early August 1921. The journey on the Dutch steamship *Friesland* was long but uneventful: Danielson lay in a dormant state through most of it; the Tcho-Tchos had taught him this would conserve his life force, preventing him from losing it so quickly. He had to feed only four times on the entire trip. Each killing he conducted quite discreetly, and the Dimensional Shambler carried off the body into the nether realms after the feeding ended—except in one case, where the terrified victim died of a heart attack before the Shambler could touch him.

But at last Danielson arrived back in England. He returned to his manor at Barnet, which was to serve as his home base, and began to plan his campaign against his countrymen. Although he was now evilly insane, some shards of the man Danielson once was remained, occasionally to surface and regain some measure of control over his now twisted mind. Effectively, the young baronet had developed a split personality—his old self hanging on by a thread, grasping at control, while the evil being he'd become drove him on to kill to live.

Although the evil Danielson was dominant, the original Sir John had enough influence to restrict his alter ego's killings in the early stages: He would not, he determined, prey on those of his own class, nor even those whose station in life was only just below his. No, he would prey on the riffraff, the worthless lives of the lower-class unfortunates of the East End—Spitalfields, Limehouse, and Whitechapel. Surely, he thought in his warped logic, this would not be too evil. Most would eventually die anyway, in poverty, unmourned, uncared for. And his evil self agreed, seeing the advantage in this: In the East End, he faced little chance of encountering anyone who'd recognize Sir John Danielson. And so his chances of discovery would be minimal, and he could continue to kill and feed, again and again, with impunity.

And those on whom he could most easily prey? The most vulnerable, he decided, those from whom he could elicit the greatest fear—and thus the most life energy—were also those who would be the least missed: The women who walked the streets, selling their pitiful bodies for mere pence and a place to sleep for the night. After all, thousands of them plied

their age-old trade in London. Who indeed would miss any of them, should they simply disappear one night?

Danielson planned well, familiarizing himself with the streets and back alleys of the East End over the course of several weeks—until, at last, his need for life force drove him to seek his first victim. In the early hours of August 31, 1921, Sir John picked up an East End streetwalker, and the grisly game was afoot. The psychic vampire scored his first success that night: He drained the life force from the terrified streetwalker, who remained alive while the mid-blasting horror of the Dimensional Shambler slashed her throat, sides, and abdomen, tearing open her stomach and pulling her intestines out before her terrified eyes. The extreme terror of the woman, far beyond that of his previous victims, added another dimension to the killing—it was like adding spice or relish to the meat and potatoes of the mere life force he'd drained previously. Danielson savored its "taste," and he knew that, from then on, his future victims would all be women—and streetwalkers, in particular. The pattern was set.

And so it continues . . . as your Investigators are called in to discover the source of several unusual killings in East London—or, if your campaign is based somewhere else, wherever your Investigators call home. As an aristocrat, Danielson has sufficient funds to travel wherever he wishes. And if things begin to get too hot for him in London, he has no problem traveling the world, seeking out new victims on which to feed: Paris, Rome, Berlin, New York, Los Angeles . . . even Arkham, Massachusetts. Danielson may even pay another visit to his Tcho-Tcho masters, perhaps picking up a Giant Sumatran Rat as a secondary companion should things get too dicey with the Dimensional Shambler. He could then keep the rat in the hold of his private yacht, the *Matilda Briggs*, to loose along the dockyards of whatever city he's visiting to generate even more fear.

Sir John Danielson, Baronet, Age 23, Aristocrat, Psychic Vampire

STR 19 CON 17 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 23 DEX 13
APP 12 EDU 16 SAN 0 HP 16

Mental Disorder: Split-personality (Shards of the original Danielson remain and surface from time to time, but he grows weaker every day. Roll 1D6 every 1D10 days to determine whether the old Danielson emerges; on a roll of 6, he does for 1D4 hours.)

Skills: Administration 20%, Acting 45%, Conceal 46%, Credit Rating 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 40%, Drive 35%, Etiquette 80%, Gambling 40%, Hide 65%, Listen 55%, Observation 25%, Occult 60%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 35%, Other Language: French 75%, Other Language: German 65%, Other Language: Greek 60%, Other Language: Latin 55%, Other Language: Dutch 45%, Other Language: Spanish 30%, Ride 55%, Seduction 45%, Streetwise (East End London) 40%, Sneak 65%.

Weapons: Fist 55%, 1D3+1D6; Sword cane* (as foil) 50%, 1D6+2; (as cane) 25%, 1D8
*Enchanted, acts as a Magic Point battery; currently holds 67 MPs.

Armor: None, but all regular, nonenchanted weapons do only half-damage; regenerates one-fifth POW hit points/round (see psychic vampire spell description)

Spells: Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler (Special), Create Gate, Shrivelling, Enchant Cane, Bind Giant Rat, Flesh Ward, Glamour, Sustain Life, Psychic Drain.

Sir John Danielson is 23 years old (in 1921). He is 5'10" normally. At full (increased) POW, however, he reaches 5'11", and when his POW has drained to less than 10, his physical stature shrivels to as short as 5'6". Danielson's complexion is somewhat shallow and pale, with foreign tinges inherited from his mother. His face is normally long and thin, becoming almost cadaverous in appearance when low on POW, although it appears fuller at his maximum POW. His hands are pale and delicate, with long tapering fingers. His hair is brown, and his moustache, when he wears it, thin and fair. His dark eyes almost seem to glow in the darkness when he is

possessed with the desire to feed off the life forces of others.

Danielson indulged briefly in theatrics while at Oxford, just enough to gain some experience in makeup techniques. During his first few killings, he occasionally employed different disguises when roaming the streets of East London. Now, however, he has arrogantly chosen to forswear such changes of appearance and dress and appear only as himself.

Danielson normally wears dark clothing and a long, black, red-lined cape on his deadly soirées. His headgear varies between a silk top hat, a wide-brimmed hard-felt hat, a deerstalker, and a jaunty peaked cap. (He recalled those particular pieces of headgear as being worn, according to witnesses, by Jack the Ripper back in the 1880s. He felt a delicious sense of irony in donning them himself.) He always carries a red handkerchief in his pocket, a habit he picked up while studying at St. Bart's. And he always takes along his favorite clay pipe, which he smokes while the Shambler does its work. He carries a sword cane, too, which acts as a magic point battery to aid him in casting spells and controlling the Shambler, as necessary.

Thanks to his nature as a psychic vampire, Danielson is extremely strong and possesses an iron constitution. All normal weapons do only half-damage to him, though enchanted weapons do full damage. This supernatural toughness, as well as his knowledge of the Flesh Ward spell, make him very difficult to kill if confronted. He has become utterly ruthless and will not hesitate to use the Shambler or his own spells, especially Shrivelling, against any who oppose him. His only real weakness is his POW loss as a psychic vampire and the difficulty that gives him in regaining his magic points, although the enchanted sword cane "battery" is very helpful in this. Danielson will now do anything necessary to sustain his unnatural existence.

Another victim of psychic vampirism?



THE DIRIGIBLE: A SAMPLE VEHICLE

It's Up, Up, and Away in this beautiful balloon—provided you're not Trying to escape from Byakhee, Night Gaunts, or other Winged Beasts . . .

Note: This write-up was part of the “Alternative Vehicles in *CoC*” chapter that I had to pull from the book, as it was just too long. So instead, here's a teaser for those in need of a lift. As described in the “Endnotes of Evil” section that follows, the original article was written for Chaosium's *Superworld* RPG, so it contained a few concepts and terms absent from *CoC*. Here's a brief explanation to help you get up to speed:

SIZ: This, of course, represents the size of the vehicle in *CoC* terms. It also represents the STR of the vehicle for lifting/pushing/pulling. It's also the vehicle's hit points. (Divide by 10 if using the vehicle rules in the *CoC* rulebook.) Some vehicles, such as this dirigible, have more than one SIZ for different purposes. Larger vehicles are easier to hit: Add +5% to your chance to hit a vehicle for every 10 SIZ points it has more than 20. (Round up or down if SIZ isn't directly dividable by 10.) Once all SIZ points have been taken in damage to the vehicle, it's destroyed—and disabled even before that.

Speed: This is how fast the vehicle can travel in miles per hour.

RES: This stands for “resistance.” It's equivalent to how much armor protection the vehicle's materials give to it. Reduce any damage rolled against the vehicle by this much. Some vehicles, as here, have more than one RES value for different parts of its body.

Passengers: Self-explanatory—how many people the vehicle normally carries.

Cargo Capacity: Again, self-explanatory—how much additional weight in pounds the vehicle can carry. By converting the weight to SIZ, it's also a measurement of how many additional passengers can be carried in lieu of cargo.

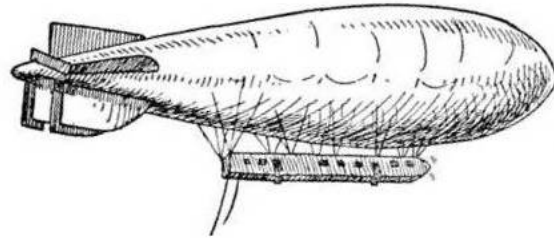
Standard Equipment: These are items that the vehicle comes with off the rack, so to speak, as well as its special capabilities based on the type of vehicle it is—in this case, being an airship, it can fly and glide to an unpowered landing.

Extra Equipment: This describes some other items you can add to the vehicle after initial purchase,

if you're going that route. If you're using the vehicle as already being in service, depending on its nature (whether it's a passenger or cargo ship or a military vessel), it may already have these items equipped when encountered by the Investigators. Some of it may be era specific, too. Dirigibles flying prior to WWII, for example, wouldn't have radar or pressurized cabins.

Limitations: Characteristics of the vehicle that prevent it from performing certain tasks or that make it vulnerable under certain conditions. You're not going to be racing a jet fighter in a dirigible, for example.

Notes: These comments provide some additional information about the vehicle.



VEHICLE TYPE: Dirigible

SIZ: 120/85/60*

SPEED: 60

RES: 7/5/1**

PASSENGERS: 6

CARGO CAPACITY: 5,500 lbs.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT: Flight, glide (for nonpowered landings), radio (65 mile range, but extended through relays in modern-day campaigns), heater

EXTRA EQUIPMENT: Light armor (gondola only), weaponry (light machine guns, bombs, light cannon, rockets), radar (20 mile range), pressurized cabin, spotlight

LIMITATIONS: (1) *Slow:* Usual speed no more than half the maximum listed. (2) *Fragile:* Extremely vulnerable to violent atmospheric conditions; double any negatives to skill rolls for all travel during any violent weather conditions—

thunderstorms, hurricanes, etc.—see table at bottom of this page (3) *Big, vulnerable target*: Slow speeds and a large surface area make it easy to hit.

NOTES: *The first SIZ listed is the area of a dirigible, used to determine its to hit modifier; the second is its SIZ as weight (mass); the third is its SIZ as STR for the purpose of lift capacity.

**The first RES value is that of the gondola, the second that of the windshields and viewing ports, the third of the air bag. Unless characters are specifically aiming at the gondola (SIZ 40 for to hit modifiers), a hit on a dirigible is on the air bag 85% of the time—100% if the attack is from above. If the gondola is hit, the chance of the hit being on a glass port is 30%.

The air bag of the craft is made up of several smaller gas bags so that hits against the air bag require two-thirds of its SIZ as area in damage before the craft is disabled (though it begins losing altitude when half its SIZ in damage is gone, settling gently to the ground). If hits are obtained on the gondola, only one-third of the dirigible's total SIZ in damage is necessary to make it inoperable (assuming the engine and/or the crew or flight instruments are damaged or destroyed); the dirigible continues to float freely without power.

Most craft designated as dirigibles have a rigid inner frame, although some may not (especially very early examples prior to the advent of the zeppelin).

Adventuring Uses

This particular vessel may be encountered by Investigators almost anywhere in the years between the Great War and the late 1930s. Many armed forces used dirigibles until they were replaced by heavy bombers in the years leading up to WWII. Investigators who encounter British secret agent Altamont may be able to hitch a ride on a British Navy dirigible, especially if they're in one of the more far-flung reaches of the Empire (India, Burma, and so on). On the other hand, a passenger/cargo vessel may be hired by dilettante Violet Spade for one of her expeditions into the hinterlands in search of a cure for her special condition (see the NPCs section). And who knows? Perhaps old sea dog Captain Sinbad

Ahab may have left his beloved ocean to sail the skies in his own dirigible—one that happens by when the Investigators are in trouble.

If the dirigible is a military vessel—or a civilian craft armed for self-defense—it may mount one to four light machine guns, most likely Lewis light MGs. In place of one or two machines guns, it could also mount one or two light cannon (probably no heavier than 2- to 5-pounders), and, rarely, a rack or two of Victorian-era Hale rockets (although these were dangerous in light of the high flammability of the hydrogen gas used in the airships of this period). It may also carry several light bombs. (Use the M79 Grenade Launcher for the cannon and the LAW for the rockets, both from the Weapons Table in the *CoC* rulebook. Give bombs a 25% chance to hit; damage, 6D6/6yd.)

To simulate the highly flammable nature of a dirigible's hydrogen gas, have the pilot make a Luck +10% roll every time the dirigible takes a hit from bullets or anything else that could, conceivably, set the gas ablaze. (If hit with an explosive shell or rocket, reduce the roll to half Luck.) Roll Luck +10% again if rockets are fired from the dirigible as well.

A couple things you'll notice are missing from this write-up: cost and ranges. I've assumed that either an Investigator has sufficient funds to hire or otherwise obtain a dirigible—or he doesn't. Buying one isn't likely to be an option for most characters in most campaigns. And if an airship is encountered under the command of others, price doesn't matter either. Range, too, is unnecessary in most *CoC* games. Again, either the vehicle is going to get them where they want to go, refueling as necessary along the way, or it isn't. Only should the vessel be piloted into extremely remote areas of the world will refueling become problematic, and in such cases, sufficient fuel is usually taken along with the airship as cargo.

And that should be enough to take you up, up, and away . . . at least till the full vehicle write-up makes it to a monograph near you . . .

Weather Modifiers to Pilot Skill:

Rain/Snow	-10
Heavy Rain/Snow/Ice	-20
Light Fog	-10
Heavy Fog	-20
Dense Fog	-30
High Winds	-25



“Hey, man—*great* costume! Ummm, why are you looking at me like that? Dan? Hey, you’re scaring me! Back off, man! Back . . . Arrrggghhhh!”

Mythos Lesson #6: *Never* put on an enchanted Moon Creature costume—even for Halloween!

ENDNOTES— OF *EVIL* . . .

*A dark, twisted history of how this book came to be
For those who like a little nostalgia with their horror . . .*

Okay—we’re almost done. By now, however, you may be wondering just how this particular book came to be an M.U. monograph—and who the heck is *this* guy, anyway? (This is for those of you who’ve picked the book up at a Chaosium booth at Gen Con or some other convention, skipped the front matter, including your humble author’s biography, skimmed the rest of the book, and just starting reading the Endnotes for some ungodly reason.) Well, let me tell you the long, gory, story

(Oh, and for those of you who really don’t actually care, don’t worry about it. Just skip the endnotes altogether and go back through the body of the book for the meat. Of course, you’ll be missing a simply *fascinating* story about the early days of role-playing, when it was still an intimate hobby, attracting maybe only a few hundred to a few thousand gamers at best to the primitive conventions of the day—ancient history for some of you now, but good memories to those of us who got started back then, in the good old days of Xeroxed rules stapled between black-and-white cardstock covers, most selling for \$5-\$10 at most. And though the prices aren’t the same in these times of higher-than-ever inflation—anyone else remember when you could get a burger, fries, and a drink and get change back from a dollar?—Chaosium’s M.U. monograph line, to me at least, though a much more professional product, seems to hearken back to those great old days of gaming’s infancy . . . ah, good times, good times . . . But I digress. On with the lengthy exposition . . .)

I was introduced to role-playing back in 1980, while researching a story about gaming for the *Sagamore*, the college newspaper at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. Till that time, I’d been strictly a board gamer—old school, such as *Risk* and *Clue*—although I’d made a few excursions into SF & fantasy wargaming in the form of SPI’s *War of the Ring* and Avalon Hill’s *Starship Troopers*. As part of my research, I visited a local Indy gaming club, the Conflict Simulations Game Club, to be precise. It was kind of quiet when my friend and I got there, so after an introduction and a

tour by the guy in charge, we decided to settle down to a game of *Starship Troopers* in one of the upstairs rooms while waiting to see if things got a bit more lively. (It was a slow time of year for the club, I later found out.)

After a while, we detected a commotion of some sort downstairs: people talking, often loudly, about doing things with starships and lasers, and missing rolls, and things happening to their “adventurers.” Curious, my friend and I stole downstairs and into the room where the noise was originating. We found a group of seven or eight people sitting around a table, with paper, pencils, dice, and little booklets before them, while another fellow at the end of the table sat behind an improvised screen (actually a three-ringed binder turned on edge). This fellow seemed to be the center of attention, as he kept telling the others what was happening around them and then asking them what they were doing in response. It seemed the players were in a stolen scoutship—a star ship—and were being pursued by forces of “the Imperium.” At least that’s what he said was happening—and they responded quite in kind (and in character).

My friend and I were fascinated—what were they doing? It looked like fun, but where was the game board? How did the guy with the screen—the Referee (or GameMaster), we learned—know what was happening to the players? It was so confusing—and yet, so enticing. After a while, the gamers took a break, and I questioned them a bit, ostensibly for the article I was writing. But in truth, I wanted to learn more about what they were doing—because I wanted to try it (as did my friend). Turns out they were engaged in a role-playing game. This one was called *Traveller*, an early SFRPG, quite popular for its day, if primitive by modern standards. (In fact, the game had so few resources at the time, the Referee was also using material from another game—*Gamma World*, an RPG of futuristic mutants—and fleshing the background out with plotlines from *Star Wars* and *Battlestar Galactica* to boot.)

Well, we watched the rest of the game, after it reconvened. And when it was over, I meekly asked the Referee and players whether we could sit in on a game sometime. We were enthusiastically invited to come to the next game the following weekend. During that time, I went right out and bought a copy of the *Traveller* rules—three thin, little booklets in a small black box, its cover marked only with a red stripe and the name in white . . . or maybe it was the other way around. (It's been almost 27 years, after all, and my memory isn't the steel trap it once was.) I also wrote the article, by the way, although I waited to complete it until I'd experienced the exhilaration of role-playing for myself.

The next weekend, my friend and I played *Traveller*, our first role-playing experience—and we never looked back. After playing a few games and seeing how the GM did it, I decided that I could probably referee as well as he could if I put my mind to it. I'd been in theatre all through high school and for a while in college, so I was used to playing characters other than myself. I'd also written a number of plays—my first back in grade school, when a few friends and I put on a *Superman* play for the Spring Festival. And I wrote a series of spy spoofs for my high school paper, based on *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (Mine was called “The Man From C.O.U.S.I.N.”) So it didn't seem much of a jump for me to make, inexperienced as I still was at the time. I started out easy, choosing a published *Traveller* adventure rather than trying to create one of my own. But as I got into it, I discovered that there was a lot of open-ended situations that the booklet itself didn't cover, leaving it for the referee to fill in all the many blanks. That was disconcerting at first, but I (modestly) rose to the occasion.

During that adventure, I ended up creating one of my favorite NPCs—an old sea dog of a submarine captain (as the setting was an ocean planet) by the name of Sinbad Ahab. (If you made your way to the NPCs section earlier in the book, you got to meet the old salt, albeit a less futuristic version of the one I originally created.) Ahab was to pop up in later scenarios, as both a friend and a helper to the adventurers—and a royal pain in the rear. But in creating Ahab and filling in all the missing material in the scenario—additions that, I humbly submit, made for a much more interesting time for all involved—I felt as though I'd found my true calling: writing role-playing games, supplements, and adventure scenarios! (Unfortunately, for most of us, true calling or not, it

doesn't pay the bills, so plan on getting a “real” job, too, if you choose to follow in my path.)

I continued to referee *Traveller* for several years, creating my own adventures and taking them to area game conventions to run. My first original scenario was a time-travel adventure—I called it “Time Traveller”—where the futuristic adventurers traveled back to late-19th century Earth (Victorian London to be precise) to steal certain items for their patron, whom I named “Dr. Quatermass” as a tribute to the old '50s SF movies I'd loved as a kid. (The items they were to steal, by the way, were the Crown Jewels of England, from the Tower of London, and a copy of the dread *Necronomicon*, from the British Museum. As you can see from this, I was already incorporating Lovecraft into my games.) Other adventures followed, including a campaign-length adventure called *Target Assassin* that one *Traveller* licensee wanted to publish—unfortunately, at about the time that the parent company pulled the plug on them. (Parts of the scenario were later published as a *GURPS Space* adventure by Steve Jackson Games, while elements of the background star sector became *GURPS Space Atlas* 1.)

So what has this to do with *Call of Cthulhu*? Well, even as I was still running *Traveller*, I was beginning to look for something else. I loved sci-fi, but it wasn't my only interest. I was never big on fantasy—except for Tolkien, of course—so never got into playing *D&D* at all (although I did enjoy Metagaming's *The Fantasy Trip*, an elegantly playable system written by Steve Jackson). Then I began to hear rumors that Chaosium, Inc., a California-based company known mainly at the time for its *Runequest* RPG, was planning on publishing an RPG based on the dark worlds of H.P. Lovecraft. At the next Gen Con, I found the Chaosium booth and asked if the rumors were true. It turned out that they were—and I was in role-playing heaven.

I'd discovered the works of Lovecraft about a decade and a half earlier, when a friend loaned me a copy of a paperback anthology of Lovecraft's stories. (It was one of those with the cover torn off, so he'd bought it for almost nothing.) I'd accidentally left it at his place, but spotted it again when I dropped by to pick up him and his girlfriend so that we could drive overnight to a rock festival the next day in Evansville, Indiana. They weren't back yet, so I picked up the tattered book and started leafing through it; one title in particular caught my eye: “The Colour Out of Space.” Hmmm, a science

fiction tale perhaps? I started reading it. And I was fascinated—and quickly hooked. I vowed to pick up as much as I could find by this H.P. Lovecraft, as he seemed to be writing science fiction tinged with horror—an amalgamation that proved irresistible to me. (His name, at least, was familiar to me already because a rock band had used it just a few years before.) Just then, my friend got back, and we quickly packed off to Evansville.

I was driving my old '68 Barracuda, and by the time we got started, it was way after 10 p.m. To get to our destination as quickly as possible, I decided to take the little winding, hilly back roads between Indianapolis and Evansville rather than going out of the way to stay on the main highways. The air was humid that night, and there was mist in the air—and I was getting pretty tired and bleary eyed after a while. But onward I drove when, suddenly, Lovecraft's world made quite an unexpected excursion into mine. As I headed up a hill, I noticed at the top a patch of mist, glowing oddly. As we ascended the incline, the glow within the mist became increasingly brighter. My tired mind began to dwell on only one thought: *The Colour Out of Space!*

And then another car rose over the crest of the hill driving in the opposite direction. I breathed a very loud sigh of relief, waking up the couple in the backseat. I found myself unable, however, to give an adequate description of what had just occurred to them. (Just as this description fails to live up to the actual occurrence—unless you've ever experienced the same thing, influenced as I was by Lovecraft's compelling prose.)

Well, my life wasn't sucked dry that night, so I was still around when Chaosium first released *Call of Cthulhu*. I don't recall now whether I first found it at the convention or picked it up at a local game store. But whichever it was, I sat right down and read through the entire game—and then began to prepare my first *CoC* campaign. (I tossed out all my *Traveller* scenario plans, put the books and notes for that game into storage, and never looked back.) Here, things get a little hazy—I don't recall if I first ran one of the quick-to-follow *CoC* scenarios or first created and ran one of my own. The first published campaign I ran was *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*—and perhaps that was what my players first faced. Aside from the gripping storyline, those games were most memorable to me for the one player who ended up running through—and getting killed off—an entire family of Investigators. Then there was the only player whose

initial Investigator survived the entire campaign—mainly because he kept going catatonic at the first SAN roll and was out of the action while the rest of the party was getting slaughtered. (Ironically, after surviving major horrors such as Dread Cthulhu himself, the same Investigator was killed by a mere werewolf in a follow-up scenario!)

Ah, but then was my first original *CoC* scenario, in whatever order I ran it: "The Yorkshire Horrors." But there was a catch to this one. Although the game was set solely in the 1920s when it first came out, I wanted to do a scenario set in the 1890s—and in England, to boot. Why? Two words: Sherlock Holmes. I'd become a full-fledged Sherlockian a decade or so earlier, after taking a Children's Lit course at I.U.P.U.I (to help fill the literature requirement for my English degree). One of the books we read in the course was *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Again, I was fascinated—the first time any piece of fiction had so much affected me as those first tales by Lovecraft. I at once went out and bought and devoured all of Doyle's tales of the Great Detective of Baker Street. But I quickly found out there were more Holmes stories than those written by Sir Arthur. At that time, there were Sherlock Holmes pastiches aplenty! (A *pastiche*, by the way, for those who don't have a dictionary handy, is a story written in the style of another author, most often using characters created by that author.)

As I read more and more Holmes, including stories setting him in far different times, places, and settings than Victorian London—several with a horror setting, such as Loren Estleman's novels pitting Holmes against Dracula and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde—I began to wonder. How would Sherlock Holmes deal with—and fare against—the Cthulhu Mythos? Holmes, of course, claimed to be a firm disbeliever in all things supernatural—but maybe that was just what he told Dr. Watson. (Surely, he'd not want to throw the good doctor's entire worldview into rank upheaval by telling him about the mind-blasting horrors of Cthulhu and company.) But then, how would one interject Holmes into a Mythos tale? (This was, of course, many, many years before such Holmes/Lovecraft crossovers as *Shadows Over Baker Street* and similar works.)

Then I remembered something that Sherlockian Sir William Baring-Gould had touched upon only briefly in his fictional biography of the Master Sleuth, *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street*. Baring-



Gould had put together his own chronology of all the Holmes stories, fitting them into certain years, depending on anything from actual dates in the stories to his own (educated) whimsy. He couldn't, however, fit any of the original stories into the year 1896, so he instead wrote that year off as a time when Holmes was engaged in a case involving "black magic in the 19th century." Hmm—what kind of black magic? Perhaps the Cthulhian kind? Baring-Gould had also postulated from clues in the Sherlockian Canon that Holmes had grown up in the North Riding of Yorkshire and that his father's name was Siger Holmes (deduced from Holmes' alias as a Norwegian explorer named Sigerson). Hmm, Yorkshire. A germ of an idea was forming.

What if Holmes *had* been involved in a case of black magic that year—and what if it had occurred at his home in Yorkshire. I pulled out an old 19th-century British guidebook and began looking up places in the North Riding of Yorkshire that could offer a promising backdrop to a Holmes/Mythos scenario. To my astonishment, on one map, near the town of Northallerton, I found a tiny village by the name of Sigton. *Sigton!* As in *Siger Holmes!* It was all too much—this *had* to be the hometown of Sherlock Holmes . . . and it quickly became the setting for "The Yorkshire Horrors." Well, I put it all together, created some Investigators, a few of them based on characters in a Victorian mystery I'd read (one published by Arkham House, no less), and got my regular gaming group together for the first (as far as I know) 1890s *Call of Cthulhu* adventure.

It went well—very well, in fact. So well that, despite the 1920s being the only setting for the game at the time, I queried Chaosium as to whether they'd like to see the scenario as a *CoC* submission. To my surprise, they did. (Surprised mainly because I'd earlier queried them about the possibility of doing a sourcebook for Victorian London for them, along the same lines as their book on King Arthur; I'd at first received a tentative go-ahead, but then they decided against it for cost reasons. I eventually took the material I'd put together for the project and wrote it up generically as "A Gamer's Guide to Victorian London" for Steve Jackson Games; it ran in *Fantasy Gamer* #2 and, later, in a version revamped for *GURPS*, in *GURPS Horror*.)

There was just one catch—to publish "The Yorkshire Horror," Chaosium needed one of two things: Either an article on time travel, offering ways for 1920s Investigators to get back to the 1890s, or a

background article on Victorian England/London so players could create Investigators from that era. After careful thought, I decided to do both. And thus was born *Cthulhu By Gaslight* (a title I derived from a book I owned, *London By Gaslight*).

I got to work immediately on both projects, but shelved them temporarily—just long enough to create, playtest, and write up yet another *CoC* scenario, this one with a standard 1920s setting: "The Curse of Chaugnar Faugn." (I'd enjoyed Frank Belknap Long's short novel *Horror from the Hills*, which introduced Chaugnar to the world; and since this Great Old One didn't yet exist in *Call of Cthulhu*, I decided to incorporate him myself.) Ironically, this, my second original *CoC* adventure, made it into print about a year before "Yorkshire," in the *Curse of the Chthonians* book. So goes the publishing industry.

After getting ol' proboscis face out of my system, it was back to work on *Cthulhu By Gaslight*, which I completed in late 1985. I was actually still working on it early in 1986, as Chaosium had asked for a second scenario—one based in London—to go with "Yorkshire." I started work on a 60-page—or so I thought—scenario involving Jack the Ripper, but by the time I was finished, it topped out at almost 300 double-spaced pages. (This was back in the primitive days of using typewriters to transcript scenarios.) It turned out to be far too long for *Gaslight*, so I shelved it. (And so it remained until recently, when *Return of the Ripper* finally saw publication as an M.U. monograph.)

But it turned out that my Ripper scenario wasn't the only thing that was too long. A number of sections of *Gaslight* also needed to be cut for various reasons. (Some of them I'd slated to finally appear in the follow-up *Gaslight Companion*—another project that unfortunately got shelved; but it, too, has gained new life as a coming M.U. monograph.) Among them was a section providing several new skills for the game—those that I thought necessary to translate *CoC* into the 1890s. (Of course, as it turned out, they weren't *really* necessary, as *Gaslight* was quite playable without them—but I still missed them and allowed players to use them in my own games if they wanted.)

Not too long afterward, I got involved with a small game company in Indiana that was going to publish a licensed series of *CoC* books. The first was to be a book of three scenarios titled *Shades of Innsmouth*. It included the title scenario (another

first, as none of Chaosium's Innsmouth books had yet been published), a Chaugnar Faugn follow-up by the late J. Andrew Keith, and a scenario involving Native American folklore and superstition mixed with the Cthulhu Mythos. The book was a little light in page count, however, but not enough to add either of the other two scenarios we had in the pipeline for our next book. (At least, as editor, that was my judgment at the time.) Then I had an idea—the unpublished skills from *Gaslight* could be put together with some other *CoC* material I had floating around to create a short article that would give us the desired page count—and without running over our print budget. And thus was born . . . “A Cthulhian Miscellany.” (Ta daaaaahhhh!)

But, as so often happens in the publishing business, that small company fell by the wayside before publishing the *CoC* book—or anything else, for that matter. So again, the *Gaslight* skills, along with the new spells, Mythos books, and so on that I'd planned to put into the article, were in limbo. (As was the article I'd started putting together for the next *CoC* book by the company, this one to be titled “Spawn of Cthulhian Miscellany” and to include, among other things yet to come, the four NPCs now found in this book.) I went on to write “The Killer Out of Space,” for *Cthulhu Now*, which turned out to be my last published *CoC* work for 20 years (except for an article on running séances in *CoC*—another item that was pulled from *Gaslight*—that *Dragon* magazine bought).

I continued to run *CoC* scenarios at local and national conventions that I could get to and hoped to see them published at some point. But unfortunately, like *Ripper*, they were all too long to go into a book of scenarios, and single-scenario books weren't a big draw at the time.

Years went by. The pressures of my own “real” job in publishing caused me to drift away not only from writing RPGs but from running or playing them as well. Then, early in 2001, I was contacted by Steve Jackson Games and asked whether I'd be interested in writing up a Victorian supplement for *GURPS*. Having been out of the industry for so long and having so little time outside of work to do anything creative, I hesitated but finally accepted the project. And that got me back into gaming. Two years later, GenCon moved to Indianapolis—and it was suddenly no longer too costly for me to attend. And at the con, I reconnected with some of the folks from Chaosium, the company having purchased a booth after the

deadline for being listed in the con's program—which made finding them there a pleasant surprise.

I was still working on the *GURPS* project then, which had been delayed due to the increased pressure I was experiencing at work, plus a number of medical problems that had started cropping up after I'd hit age 50. (These would be compounded the following year by quadruple bypass surgery and its aftermath.) So although the idea of maybe dusting off some of my old *CoC* material to see if there was any interest in it now didn't even cross my mind. And it wouldn't until two things happened: Chaosium started their monograph line, and my wife lost her job.

The former offered *CoC* writers increased opportunity to have previously unpublished pieces published. The latter created enough free time for my wife that she could take a lot of the old typed or hand-written manuscripts I'd put together for my *CoC* scenarios and enter them into the computer, ready for me to do a quick edit and layout and insert art. (Some of the latter, including a lot of what's in this book, was left over from the licensed book that died on the vine—after paying for the art. Other pieces, my wife redrew from my crude sketches, and I found some public-domain art, too. And I even managed to find a really good artist for some more.) And, of course, we could use every extra dollar we could get.

To take this long tale to its conclusion, after turning two existing scenarios into monographs, I thought of all my old “Cthulhian Miscellany” material for those two unpublished or unfinished licensed *CoC* books. Much of it was already typed up, which made it easy for my wife to enter so I could get another monograph book done relatively quickly (or so I thought). We were still a bit short for the length for a monograph, however, so I kept on searching—and found an article I'd written for the *Companion to Superworld*.

In the '80s, Chaosium had published its own superhero RPG, *Superworld* (itself originally one of three components in a set called *Worlds of Wonder*). I helped playtest it and, when a *Companion* was proposed, wrote up a pair of articles for it—one on weather, which made it into the *Companion*, and one on vehicle creation and rules, which did not (although it was slated to go into the next expansion for the game). Sadly, *Superworld* went out of print, mainly because Hero Games' *Champions* system had pretty much cornered the superhero RPG market



by then. (A shame, since *Superworld* was a far more playable and fun system, in my humble opinion.)

Since no more *Superworld* books were to be published, I queried Chaosium about redoing the vehicles piece for *Call of Cthulhu*. (At that time, the vehicles rules that now appear in the *CoC* rulebook didn't exist.) The response was cautiously positive, with the caveat that it would need to be simplified to fit into *CoC*. I was working on another project for a different game company at the time, so I shelved the vehicles article, intending to convert it to *CoC* when I could find the time.

But as did so many other projects, the vehicles article went into permanent exile in my files. So much time passed that I actually forgot I'd even written it. But again, when I was looking through some of my files for old scenarios to write up as monographs, I ran across several pieces of correspondence with Chaosium mentioning the vehicles article. My aging mind made the connections, and I remembered the article—but had no idea where it was. On a visit to our storage space soon after, however, I found a forgotten box of files—and in it was the vehicles article. And so I did a rewrite to refit it for *CoC* (as much as possible), and in it went as well—at least for a while . . .

(As it turned out, however, it took a *lot* more time and work to rework the piece for *CoC* than I'd expected; many of the tables and rules I could simply refer to that were in *Superworld* are absent in *CoC*, it being a very different game, so I had to add data for all those as well. But as I fixed one thing, I realized

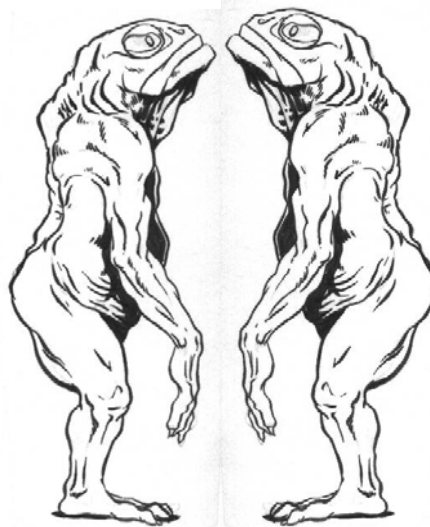
that something else was missing and needed to be covered. This continued on for several weeks until, at last, I had to admit defeat—at least temporarily—and pull the vehicle article from this book. Sigh. But have no fear—with it turning out so long, I've decided to put the expanded *CoC* vehicle coverage into yet another M.U. monograph for those who still are revving up their engines for more motorized mayhem in *CoC*, coupling it with another article involving travel: my "Time Travel in *CoC*" piece that originally appeared in *Cthulhu By Gaslight*. The result: *Crashin' Cthulhu vs. Shadows into Time!* Look for it sometime soon . . . I hope . . .)

With the vehicles article out and a bit of new material pulled from some of my other recent (and past) scenarios added to the brew (including a sample vehicle as a teaser and a short piece on psychic vampires), *A Cthulhian Miscellany* was finally born . . . if you can call something devised in such an unnatural manner as actually being "born." (Cue the maniacal laughter of Viktor Frankenstein: "It's alive . . . it's alive—it's *alive*!!!!")

And now, at last, you hold it in your hands. (Sorry about the slime—it should wipe off easily, or not...) I hope you'll find at least something herein for use in your own *CoC* campaigns—whether skills, spells, NPCs, or whatever. And if you've kept with me to this point, at least you now know what a long, strange trip it's been (cue the Grateful Dead music).

—William A. Barton (SAN 3)

June 2007



Mythos Lesson #7: Never get involved in a staring contest with a Deep One: You'll Lose! (And probably get eaten to boot.)



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